

A Booklet for Kansas Families
Communication and
Literacy



Birth to Age 5

Based on the Kansas Early Learning Document

**Sincere thanks to all those who helped author this series of
booklets including:**

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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 communication and literacy development in young children and is intended for use by Kansas families.

This booklet weaves a common thread of understanding related to what communication and literacy development look like during the early childhood years.

Suggested Use of This Document

- 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, consider speaking with your child's doctor, local health department, teacher, or 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)
866-711-6711

Young Infants *by 8 months*

What to Watch For

1. Young infants typically make sounds to gain the attention of a familiar person.
2. Young infants typically use different cries to signal different needs.
3. Young infants generally respond to facial expressions of adults.
4. Young infants may imitate the sounds, facial expressions, or gestures of another person.
5. Young infants may be able to recognize the sounds of their home language and languages of adults with whom they spend time.
6. Young infants will typically gaze at pictures in books.
7. Young infants typically interact with books by sucking, biting, chewing and touching.
8. Young infants may pay attention to pages of a book being read.



Young Infants *by 8 months*

How to Help - Try This!

1. Imitate and respond positively to the sounds of young infants to encourage them to repeat their earliest attempts to speak.
2. Crying is one way young infants communicate their needs. Listen closely and respond to the cries of young infants. Soon you will learn the difference between cries when young infants are mad, sad, hungry, or bored!
3. Smile! Talk to young infants! The moods of young infants often mirror their caregiver's moods.
4. Making silly sounds, blowing bubbles or sticking out your tongue may be something young infants will enjoy imitating.
5. Speak to young infants in your native language. Young children are typically able to absorb languages they hear quite early. Young infants need to be able to communicate with all of their caregivers.
6. Young infants usually enjoy board books with large pictures. Point to the pictures in books and talk naturally and cheerfully as you tell the story.
7. Read soft or sturdy board books to young infants. Expect them to interact with the book by feeling or chewing.
8. Hold books upright and close enough to young infants so that they can focus their eyes on the page. Snuggling with young infants while reading the story makes it more enjoyable. If young infants become upset, it's alright to stop reading before you reach the end of the book.



Older Infants *by 18 months*

What to Watch For

1. Older infants typically use sounds or hand movements to communicate.
2. Typically, older infants point fingers to direct adult attention.
3. Older infants may imitate sounds, patterns in words or sounds of another person.
4. Older infants typically speak their first words.
5. Older infants typically make sounds of the language used at home.
6. Older infants may pay attention during short stories.
7. Older infants may recognize favorite or familiar books by the cover.
8. Scribbling using large strokes is typical for older infants.
9. Older infants may attempt to hold large markers and crayons.



Older Infants *by 18 months*

How to Help - Try This!

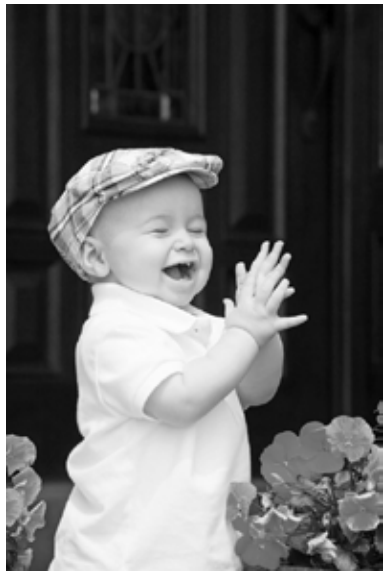
1. Respond to older infants sounds and hand movements. Repeat simple words such as, “momma and dadda.” Teaching older infants a few words in sign language like “more,” and waving, “Bye-Bye,” may help reduce frustration.
2. To help older infants learn new words, talk about what you are doing.
3. Hold conversations with older infants in which you “interpret” what they are saying. When older infants babble, respond. For example, “Are you happy? You like that, don’t you!”
4. Expect older infants to babble many sounds. Repeat their attempts to use words.
5. Use your home language when speaking to older infants.
6. Older infants enjoy being read short stories every day. Choose books with only a few words on a page because their attention is short.
7. Let older infants choose their favorite book. Reading the same book over and over again is typical for this age.
8. Display the work of older infants low enough for them to see it, such as on the family refrigerator.
9. Provide older infants with larger, washable markers or fat crayons and large pieces of paper. Tape the paper to the floor or a low table so it doesn’t move while older infants draw.



Toddlers *by 36 months*

What to Watch For

1. Toddlers typically talk in two-to-three word sentences.
2. A vocabulary of twenty or more words is typical for toddlers.
3. Toddlers may use words to label their actions.
4. When toddlers ask questions, the rhythm of their words sounds like a question.
5. Toddlers may answer simple questions.
6. Toddlers are typically able to follow one direction at a time.
7. Toddlers may be able to answer simple questions about a story.
8. Toddlers may be able to tell the difference between a letter of the alphabet and a scribble.
9. Toddlers may understand that Kansas and Katie begin with the same sound.
10. Holding a book right side up to look at pictures is typical of toddlers.
11. Toddlers may occasionally talk about pictures they are drawing.
12. Recognizing familiar letters and signs around them is typical of toddlers.
13. Toddlers may scribble as if they are writing.
14. Toddlers may occasionally describe their drawings when they are finished



Toddlers *by 36 months*

How to Help - Try This!

1. Encourage toddlers to put words together to begin making short sentences. For example, when toddlers say, "Truck," expand by saying, "Yes, a red truck!"
2. Talking with toddlers about what's happening during the day helps them learn new words.
3. Talk with toddlers about their play. Help them describe what they're doing. For example, "You built a road with your blocks! Is that for your cars?"
4. Recognize when toddlers ask a question and respond by asking the question back to them. For example, if a toddler asks, "Me go out?" A caregiver might respond, "Do you want to go outside?"
5. Ask simple questions about toddler's play and give them time to answer. For example, "What do you think is in your cup?"
6. Provide simple one-step directions for toddlers, such as, "Time to pick up toys!"
7. For example, point to a picture and ask a toddler, "What's that?" or, "Where is the balloon?"
8. Provide opportunities for toddlers to interact and play with letters of the alphabet, such as magnets or puzzles. Point out words in books as you're reading.
9. Emphasize the beginning sounds in familiar words. For example, "Book and Ben sound the same!"
10. Hold books right side up to look at pictures then turn books upside down. Talk to toddlers about pictures being upside down. Help your toddler understand that books are read right side up.
11. Let toddlers tell you about their artwork. What you see may or may not look like what they are describing. That's ok, be excited about their work!
12. Point out words, signs and symbols around toddlers. Talk about what each one means. For example, "Red means stop, green means go."
13. Encourage toddlers to talk about what they are writing, drawing, or painting.
14. Ask toddlers about their drawing. Ask permission to write the words of their story on the paper.

Young Preschoolers *by 48 months*

What to Watch For

1. Young preschoolers may look at and turn pages one at a time while holding a book.
2. Young preschoolers may tell a story or make up a story using pictures.
3. Young preschoolers typically can name and point out at least three letters of the alphabet.
4. Young preschoolers typically recognize their name when printed.
5. Scribble writing that may look like letters is typical of young preschoolers.
6. Young preschoolers may recognize rhymes or create their own.
7. Young preschoolers may use words related to a topic being discussed, such as their family, pet or familiar routines.
8. Young preschoolers typically combine two or three sentences when talking.
9. Young preschoolers typically listen to a story and ask questions about it.
10. Young preschoolers may describe how they are feeling.
11. Young preschoolers may ask questions about what they don't understand, such as, "Why?"
12. Young preschoolers may use words to describe their roles and actions while pretending.



Young Preschoolers *by 48 months*

How to Help - Try This!

1. Provide books for young preschoolers and encourage them to hold the book while looking at it and turning pages one at a time.
2. Encourage young preschoolers to tell you a story when looking at pictures. Ask questions about the story and make comments.
3. Play letter games with your young preschooler. For example, while singing the alphabet song, find some printed letters in the environment.
4. Help young preschoolers recognize their own name. For example, talk with young preschoolers about the letters in their name as you print their name.
5. Encourage young preschooler to write. Words that include both scribbles and letter-like symbols are typical. For example, the letter "T" may have disconnected or extra lines.
6. Sing or say rhymes with young preschoolers or encourage young preschoolers to invent their own while clapping. Listen for rhymes in songs or conversation and repeat them with your child. Pause during a rhyme and wait for young preschoolers to finish. Praise efforts.
7. When speaking with young preschoolers, use words that are specific to what is happening, such as naming parts of a car in which they are riding. (seat, carseat, window, etc.)
8. Ask young preschoolers to tell you stories about their day. For example, "What was the most exciting thing that happened today?" Encourage them to speak in two or three sentences. Asking questions about their story helps add detail to the story.
9. Talk with your young preschooler about a story you've just read. Give them opportunities to talk about the story.
10. Relate the feelings of characters in a story to the feelings of young preschoolers. For example, "The boy in the story feels sad. Have you ever felt sad?" Discuss reasons for feeling sad.
11. Respond when they ask "why," questions. Encourage their attempts to gain new information by showing how much you enjoy talking with them.
12. Encourage young preschoolers to describe what they are doing while they play. Help by providing materials to set the stage. For example, a sheet to put over a table can be a fort, tent, or castle.

Older Preschoolers *by 60 months*

What to Watch For

1. Older preschoolers may use the words “I,” “you,” and “we” in conversation.
2. Older preschoolers typically use 300 or more different words.
3. Asking “who,” “why,” and “where” questions is typical of older preschoolers.
4. Older preschoolers may ask for something they want or for help when needed.
5. Older preschoolers are typically able to answer simple questions about familiar things or events.
6. Older preschoolers usually speak correctly in short sentences.
7. Older preschoolers may use some word endings incorrectly, such as “go-ed.”
8. Choosing a favorite story is typical for an older preschooler.
9. Older preschoolers typically make related comments when a familiar story is being read.
10. Recognizing some printed letters is typical of older preschoolers.
11. Older preschooler typically will repeat familiar rhymes.
12. Older preschoolers may understand the words in a book tell the story one page at a time.
13. Acting out main events in a familiar story is typical of an older preschooler.
14. Older preschoolers may use pictures to tell and retell a story.
15. Older preschoolers may recognize word labels around them.
16. Older preschoolers may understand letters are combined to make words.
17. Older preschoolers typically tell a story using separated scribbles, shapes, and pictures.
18. Older preschoolers typically understand drawings can show ideas, stories, or events.



Older Preschoolers *by 60 months*

How to Help - Try This!

1. Help older preschoolers use words such as “I,” “you,” and “we,” by using them correctly when you speak.
2. Help children use new words through conversations. For example, read and discuss new as well as familiar books with older preschoolers.
- 3.
4. Help older preschoolers understand how things work by asking and responding to “who,” “why,” and “where questions.
5. Be responsive to older preschoolers requests when they ask for something they want or ask for help.
6. Speak to older preschoolers about familiar things or events, such as their preschool or story-time experience, or a play-date. Ask questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer such as, “Tell me about your play-date.”
7. Model good grammar by using words and language correctly when speaking to your older preschooler.
8. If an older preschooler uses the incorrect ending to a word, restate what the child has said using the correct form of the word. The child will learn from your example. Be patient and expect errors several times before older preschoolers understand.
9. Ask your older preschooler to choose their favorite story to be read during bedtime. You may grow tired of the same story long before older preschoolers. However, repetition is good. Ask older preschoolers to help read the story.
10. Wait and listen attentively when older preschoolers are talking about a familiar story. Remind your child about related events. For example, if reading a story about fishing ask, “Remember when we went fishing in grandpa’s pond?”
11. Look for printed letters in daily routines, such as driving to the market, and ask older preschoolers to name the letters and repeat the sound. For example, “Do you see the “S” on that sign? What sound does an “S” make?” when stopped at a STOP sign.
12. Listen each day for rhymes in songs or conversation and repeat them with your child. Pause during a favorite rhyme, such as “Jack and Jill went up the hill,” and wait for older preschoolers to finish.
13. Ask your older preschooler to “read” you a familiar story. Encourage older preschoolers to talk about what’s happening on each page.
14. Encourage older preschooler’s attempts at acting out main events in a familiar story by providing props, such as clothing or toys that enhance the story. For example, plastic food or hats.
15. Ask older preschoolers to tell you a story. Encourage them to use the pictures to talk about what’s happening. For example, while pointing at the pictures ask, “What’s happening here?”
16. Make a printed label for things that older preschoolers come into contact with often, such as “closet,” “door,” or “books.” Look for these words in stories and rhymes.
17. Say the sounds for the letters while reading and encourage older preschoolers to point at the letter and repeat the sound. For example, “That’s a “s.” It sounds like, “ssss.” Can you find another “s”? What sound does it make?”
18. Provide materials with which older preschoolers can draw and ask older preschoolers to talk about the story of their drawing.
19. Ask older preschoolers to describe their drawings. Drawings often represent the child’s ideas.

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Resources

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