# Developmental Milestones for Infants

Infants:

* Child-adult back and forth interaction is a priority at this stage. They need connections built by the caretaker being predictable, supportive, and responsive to their feelings and needs.
* It is more important for you to hold, sing to, and talk to newborns than to hand them a toy. In fact, “Infants need touch and physical contact with teachers in order to grow and thrive (Gross, 2008).”
* Babies engage in exploratory play - they may explore the caregivers hair and face and also objects such as rattles, books and soft toys.
* Everything goes in their mouth! They also become wary of people they are not familiar with.

Mobile Infants

* As children become mobile and more curious of the world, they begin to pull things down, throw, bite or climb on others. They do not do this to harm or to make someone upset. At this age, they see things as an extension of themselves.
* They begin to understand the purpose of toys and can operate some according to how they are intended.
* Children learn that their actions cause something to happen. Cause and effect play is important at this age - dumping and filling and manipulative toys that twist, make noise or turn.
* They are learning object permanence so games such as “peek-a-boo” hold a lot of learning.
* Mobile infants into young toddler need trusting connections and be predictable, supportive, and responsive to their emotions.

# Developmental Milestones for Toddlers

Toddlers:

* Toddlers begin to appear defiant as they are forming their independence.
* Play for this age is parallel play. Children may play with the same toys next to one another independently.
* There is a lot of development during this time period and it can be challenging for caregivers to balance boundaries with encouraging children to experiment with this new independence. It is important to not sweat the small stuff. They have so much to learn so it is best not to overleaf them. Let them get used to the important things first. If you put too much pressure on them to behave in a manner they are not capable of, it can increase anxiety and defiance and reduce confidence.
* It is important to walk them through their emotions and putting words to how they are feeling. It will decrease aggressive behavior if they can accurately express themselves. “It’s upsetting when you have to pack your toys away and you want to keep playing.” They may tantrum easily but it is important to talk with them when they have had a chance to calm down.
* Be kind and gentle when correcting.
* Toddlers do the opposite of most instructions and seldom obeys verbal commands.
* They have not yet development patience or understanding of time. They only understand and care about right now.
* Children of this age may treat others as objects. They may step on, push or hit others without remorse. This also includes the inability to share.
* Toddlers have a huge love of movement and needs outlets for their energy. They enjoy swinging, climbing, sliding and enjoy more extreme movement.
* They begin stringing together multiple movements together multiple movements like adding characters into a vehicle and then pushing it through the “town.” they also should begin to be able to use multi-step directions such as, “go pick up the block and put it back on the shelf.”
* Pretend play becomes more abstract and an object can be used to represent something else- a block can become a phone, a large box can become a car, a swing can become a space ship.

# Developmental Milestones for Twos

Twos:

* Toddlers begin to appear defiant as they are forming their independence.
* Play for this age is parallel play. Children may play with the same toys next to one another independently.
* There is a lot of development during this time period and it can be challenging for caregivers to balance boundaries with encouraging children to experiment with this new independence. It is important to not sweat the small stuff. They have so much to learn so it is best not to overleaf them. Let them get used to the important things first. If you put too much pressure on them to behave in a manner they are not capable of, it can increase anxiety and defiance and reduce confidence.
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* They begin stringing together multiple movements together multiple movements like adding characters into a vehicle and then pushing it through the “town.” they also should begin to be able to use multi-step directions such as, “go pick up the block and put it back on the shelf.”
* They may be inflexible and try to assert themselves.
* They thrive best with a rigid routine and to know what to expect.
* Motor skills are improving so they really like activities such as ball throwing, tricycles and jumping

# Developmental Milestones for Threes

Threes:

* Three year olds love to conform and being to learn to share but it is a very long process.
* At times they may begin to stutter or stammer.
* Insecure with their social-emotional development. They may whine, cry and/or frequently question. They can be extreme with friends; sometimes outgoing and sometimes shy.
* Three year olds are still continuing to gain independence and want as much control in their lives as they can get.
* Caregivers should use mistakes as opportunities to teach. Too often we feel “they know better” but they are still very much learning and a lot of that learning is trial and error.
* Just like with two year olds, do not have too many rules or it overwhelms them.

However, you must be consistent with the ones you have.

* Use positive phrases instead of “no”, “don’t”, or “can’t”. Say things like “we use our walking feet”, and “we use nice touches with friends.”
* Offer as many choices as you can. “Would you like to play with this or this?”
* Play starts changing from parallel play to associative play. They are able to create and perform games among one another.

# Developmental Milestones for PreK

Fours:

* Will start to realize the power of their words and will sometimes use them to get their way or control others
* Become competitive
* Blurs reality and fantasy
* Don’t just set the rules - tell them why they are important.
* Be consistent
* Loves exaggeration and ‘potty’ words
* Intense emotions - may hit, spit or kick
* Still learning what is real and pretend
* More persistent and demanding - behaviors seem purposely obnoxious
* Are restless and find it hard to sit still
* Play is now highly social and focused on peer relationships.
* The preschool age child participates in morning meeting, singing and dancing games.
* Group play replaces parallel play and the preschooler shows interest in being a good friend.

PreK

* Rules tend to feel flexible
* Just beginning to show empathy and that others may view things differently
* Will be able to share but still finds it difficult
* Can have a ‘potty’ humor
* May believe they are an expert of everything