

# Early Developmental Milestones

	Hearing and Understanding	Talking and Communicating
<b>Birth – 6 months</b>	<p>Startle to loud sounds.</p> <p>Respond to changes in tone of your voice.</p>	<p>Cry differently for different needs.</p> <p>Babbling sounds more speech-like with many different sounds, including <i>p, b</i> and <i>m</i>.</p>
<b>6 – 12 months</b>	<p>Enjoy games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake.</p> <p>Recognize words for common items like "cup," "shoe," "book," or "juice."</p>	<p>Imitate different speech sounds.</p> <p>Use gestures to communicate (waving, holding arms to be picked up).</p>
<b>12 – 24 months</b>	<p>Follow simple directions and understand simple questions ("Roll the ball," "Kiss the baby," "Where's your shoe?").</p> <p>Point to pictures in a book when named.</p>	<p>Say more words every month.</p> <p>Put two words together ("more cookie," "no juice," "mommy book").</p>
<b>24 – 36 months (2–3 years)</b>	<p>Understand differences in meaning ("go-stop," "in-on," "big-little," "up-down").</p> <p>Follow two requests ("Get the book and put it on the table").</p>	<p>Use two or three words to talk about and ask for things.</p> <p>Speech is understood by familiar listeners most of the time.</p>
<b>36 – 48 months (3–4 years)</b>	<p>Hear you when you call from another room.</p> <p>Answer simple who, what, where, and why questions.</p>	<p>People outside of the family usually understand child's speech.</p> <p>Use a lot of sentences that have four or more words.</p>
<b>48 – 60 months (4–5 years)</b>	<p>Pay attention to a short story and answer simple questions about it.</p> <p>Hear and understand most of what is said at home and in school.</p>	<p>Communicate easily with other children and adults.</p> <p>Use sentences that give lots of details (e.g., "The biggest peach is mine").</p>

## Source:

Adapted from American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. "How Does Your Child Hear and Talk?" Available at [www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart.htm](http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart.htm) (last accessed February 18, 2009). View the online chart for a complete list of milestones and ways to help children who are not reaching them.

# Developmentally Appropriate Activities to Help Build the Attorney-Client Relationship

Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers develop relationships through regular, consistent contact and interaction. Attorneys will get to know their very young clients by becoming engaged with them during visits to their homes and schools. Many of the activities listed here require getting down to the child's level and playing, talking, or singing with her. Not only will these interactions help develop a relationship, they will also provide much information about the child's health and development. One other important aspect of such interactions—they can be as fun for the adults as they are for the young child!

Remember that many babies in the dependency system are not developmentally "on target" so some of the activities listed below will not be appropriate for them until they are older or make developmental gains. Remember also that from the time a baby is six months old until about 18 months old, it is normal to experience stranger anxiety or express concern about being with an unfamiliar person. They may also experience separation anxiety depending on their circumstances. These normal developmental responses can present challenges when trying to form a relationship with a very young client. Although they should continue to visit the baby, attorneys must respect the baby's need to feel secure and should be careful not to force themselves into the baby's space. She will let you know if and when she is ready.

## Newborns – Three Month Olds

Older babies in this age range should be able to lift their heads up 45 degrees, laugh, and smile.

- If not distressing to the baby and acceptable with her caregiver, hold the baby.
- Talk to the baby, make eye contact, smile.
- Make movements with your mouth for the infant to watch and even imitate (such as opening and closing your mouth or puckering lips).
- Sing a nursery rhyme or read a brief board book.

## Three – Six Month Olds

Babies in this age range can often roll over, turn to a rattling sound, and hold a small rattle/toy.

- Hold the baby.
- Read a book.
- Play peek-a-boo.
- Sing a song that uses hand movements (e.g., Itsy Bitsy Spider).

## **Six – Nine Month Olds**

Babies in this age range can often sit with no support, turn to a voice, and start to feed themselves.

- Sit on the floor in front of or with the baby facing you.
- Read a book.
- Sing the Itsy Bitsy Spider and do the hand movements.
- Play a developmentally appropriate game (stacking blocks, playing with squeaky toys, putting objects into/out of a container).

## **Nine – 12 Month Olds**

Babies in this age range can generally pull to stand, say “Mama” and “Dada” or other short words, and wave bye-bye. Those closer to 12 months are typically crawling and walking.

- Play with anything that moves—toy cars, board books with “lift the flap” pages, musical instruments.
- Sing and clap in time. Encourage the baby to clap, too.
- Hide a small toy under a cup and let the baby “find” it.
- Help the baby stand.
- Name and touch different objects.

## **12 – 18 Month Olds**

Many one year olds are standing alone and starting to walk. By the time they are 18 months old, they should have started walking. (Note that if the toddler is not walking by 18 months of age, she should definitely have a Part C of IDEA evaluation or have already been evaluated and should be receiving early intervention services.)

- Sit on the ground and pass a ball back and forth.
- Read a touch-and-feel book. Read a book about animals and make the sounds of the animals—see if the child wants to try.
- Push the child in a play car or on a push and ride tricycle.
- Encourage exploring.
- Play with noisy, colorful moving objects or toys.

## **18 – 24 Month Olds**

The toddlers in this age range are learning how to run. They can imitate activities and are able to speak some words. As they approach 24 months, they can take a piece of clothing off and on, are learning how to jump, and are starting to combine words. They spend their second year continuing to develop their gross and fine motor skills and learning how to communicate verbally.

- Dance to music.
- Sing songs using instruments.

- Read books that have pictures of words that the child may know (e.g., ball, dog, cat, house) and encourage the child to help you “read” these words.
- Play outside.

## Two – Three Year Olds

By the time a child is three, he can typically speak or say words in an understandable manner and can name one friend. He can balance on one foot. Language skills and fine motor skills are becoming more fine tuned.

- Play at a park with a toddler sized playscape.
- Bring crayons or washable markers and big pieces of paper and color together.
- Read a short book with a basic plot (e.g., Goodnight Moon, The Three Little Pigs, Goldilocks and the Three Bears).
- Play music together and march or clap.
- Ask the child to sing you a song.
- Engage in dramatic play (e.g., pretending to cook in a kitchen or take care of a baby).

## Three – Four Year Olds

By the time a child is four, he can often name four colors, hop on one foot, and copy a “+” symbol. His talking will be more conversational.

- Ask the child to tell you about a favorite toy.
- Color together and ask him to tell you about his picture.
- Go on a short walk together or push him in a swing at the park.
- Do a simple large-pieced puzzle together.
- Engage in more complex dramatic play.

## Four – Five Year Olds

By the time a child is five, she can draw a person with a head, body, arms, and legs, lace a shoe, and walk on her tiptoes. Children attending Pre-K at this age will be learning to identify their letters and to count to 10 or higher.

- Play Simon Says.
- Ask her to draw a picture of herself.
- Do a 20 piece puzzle together.
- Read an I Spy book (the reader has to “spy” certain items among a group of things—e.g., all the red marbles).
- Go on a nature walk and collect small rocks and leaves in a bag.

## Sources:

ABA Center on Children and the Law Bar-Youth Empowerment Project, and National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues. *Engaging Children in the Courtroom Benchcard Series*, available at <http://www.abanet.org/child/empowerment/youthincourt.shtml>; Smariga, Margaret. *Visitation with Infants and Toddlers in Foster Care: What Judges and Attorneys Need to Know*. Washington, DC: ABA Center on Children and the Law and Zero to Three Policy Center, July 2007.

# Recommended Reading on Child Development and Child Maltreatment

## Ethical Considerations

- Koh Peters, Jean. *Representing Children in Child Protective Proceedings: Ethical and Practical Dimensions.* Lexis Nexis, 2001.
- Renne, Jennifer L. *Legal Ethics in Child Welfare Cases.* Washington, DC: ABA Center on Children and the Law, 2004.

## Early Child Development & Maltreatment

- Shonkoff, Jack P. and Deborah A. Phillips, eds. *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development.* National Research Council and Institute of Medicine Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000.
- Jones Harden, Brenda. *Infants in the Child Welfare System: A Developmental Framework for Policy & Practice.* Washington, DC: Zero to Three, 2007.

## Infant Mental Health & Early Trauma

- *Handbook of Infant Mental Health, Third Edition.* Zeanah, Charles H., ed. New York: The Guilford Press, 2009.
- *Young Children and Trauma: Intervention and Treatment.* Osofsky, Joy, ed. New York: The Guilford Press, 2007.

## Health & Well-Being

- *Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Futures: A Judge's Guide.* ABA Center on Children and the Law, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and Zero to Three National Policy Center, 2009.
- Osofsky, Joy et al. *Questions Every Judge and Lawyer Should Ask about Infants and Toddlers in the Dependency System.* Reno, NV: National Counsel of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 2001.

## System Advocacy

- Dicker, Sheryl. *Reversing the Odds: Improving Outcomes for Babies in the Child Welfare System.* Baltimore: Brookes Publishing, Inc., 2009.
- Katz, Lynne, Cindy Lederman and Joy Osofsky. *Child-Centered Practices for the Courtroom and Community: A Guide to Working Effectively with Young Children and their Families in the Child Welfare System.* Baltimore: Brookes Publishing, Inc., 2010.