

Child Development 101

Child development specialists agree there are five important areas of development: motor skills, sensory, cognitive, emotional and language. Quality childcare provides an invaluable opportunity for kids to develop their skills in a social environment. Each of these areas require daily stimulus to ensure strong growth, healthy brains and happy kids.

Large Motor Development

Crawling, rolling, pushing themselves up – these are just a few of the development skills that infants learn. Toddlers need to walk, run, jump and hop and should be provided plenty of room to help develop their bodies and brains. Childcare centers should provide plenty of room and soft rounded objects for infants to navigate their environment easily and toddlers need to be taken on walks and to the playground. Centers should include plenty of books, puzzles, board games, and stimulating daily activities under supervision as deemed appropriate by director.

Look for childcare facilities that provide plenty of opportunities throughout the day for kids to engage in activities that are fun, safe and appropriate for their age.

Sensory Development

Touch, hearing, smell, taste and sight – the senses are busy developing every day. Sensory experiences are found every day in the little things like song time and snack time. Serving a variety of foods can be a great learning experience for kids. Sensory rich activities can be simple too – like crumpling up a brown paper bag, listening to music and playing in the mud or sand.

Cognitive Development

The cognitive stage is when kids learn most rapidly. They tackle the thinking process, problem solving, and develop good judgment skills. Putting a puzzle piece in place, memorizing a song, listening to a story, naming animals and shapes in a book are all examples of cognitive activities.

[DSHS Children's Administration](#) provides further information and resources, journals and periodicals on appropriate practice for young children's brain development.

Language Development

Regular interaction, repetition, and daily routines encourage language skills in kids, but kids vary greatly in their development. Generally the first three years of life present the greatest opportunity to develop skills in this area. Look for age-specific language practices like repeated words pronounced correctly, nursery rhymes, puppet shows and story time. Learn more about how you can best support your child during this critical window of development.

[What do you know about child development? QUIZ](#)

[List of Free Online Child Development Courses](#)

[Normal Stages of Human Development \(Birth to 5 Years\)](#)