




**Developmental Continuum from Birth to Age 3 1/2:
Social Emotional Indicators***

Age Range	Attachment Trust/Security	Self-Awareness Identity/Self Esteem	Exploration Autonomy/Independence
<p>INFANT (birth to 15 mos)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newborns recognize human language and prefer their own mother's voice • Prefer human faces • Early social interaction is a smile and mutual gazing • Crawls away but checks back visually, calls, and gestures to ensure adult contact • Stretches arms to be taken • Prefers familiar adults • Acts anxious around strangers • Uses a blanket or stuffed toy for security and reassurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goes from accidentally sucking own hands to carefully watching them • Tries to make things happen • Hits or kicks things to make a pleasing sight or sound continue • Talks to self when alone • Prefers to be held by familiar people • Imitates adult behaviors • Knows own name • Understands simple directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings thumb or hand to mouth • Tracks mother's voice • Observes own hands • Babbles using all types of sounds • Uses a few words mixed with babbling to form sentences • Tries to keep a knee ride going by bouncing to get the adult started again • Shows strong feelings (anger, anxiety, affection)
<p>TODDLER (12 mos- 2 1/2 yrs)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates to others by exploring things with them • Pulls up, stands holding furniture, then walks alone • Goes through a phase of clinging to primary caregiver • Experiences periods of intense feelings when separating or reuniting with a parent • Sees others as a barrier to immediate gratification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows can make things happen but is not sure of responsibility for actions • Becomes bossy • Uses the words Me, You, and I • Says "No" to adults • Explores everything • Is sensitive to others' judging behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps looking for a toy that is hidden from view • Understands many more words than can say • Has wide mood swings (for example, from stubborn to cooperative) • Wants to do things by self
<p>PRESCHOOL (2 1/2-3 1/2-yrs)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is capable of dramatic play • Has better control over all aspects of self • Needs adult coaching to get along well with others • Shows feelings with words and in symbolic play • Is more aware that others have feelings • Can plan ahead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is capable of self-evaluation (for example, good, bad, pretty, ugly) • Tries to control self (for example, emotions and toileting) • Is learning to take turns in conversations • Knows a lot about communicating in the style of own culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses names of self and others • Can tell others about what happened that day • Has much larger vocabulary to express ideas • Shows concern for others • Classifies, labels, and sorts objects and experiences into groups

Adapted with permission from J. Ronald Lally, Abbey Griffin, et al., *Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Groups: Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE/The National Center, 1995), pp. 78-79.