



DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE CHARACTERISTICS

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Birth through age 5

Intense quest for learning.

Learns through senses and experiences.

Concrete thinker. Incapable of thinking abstractly, especially birth through age 3

Reality based. Incapable of distinguishing between fantasy and reality, especially birth through age 3

Egocentric. Does not yet understand that others have rights or feelings unlike their own; does not understand concept of sharing, especially birth through age 3

Strong sense of order. Intense need for an ordered environment and consistent routine and discipline

Strives for independence.
Beginning at about 2 years old

Most important stage of social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual development

Core of personality is formed now.
Especially social and spiritual development

Screen time interferes with normal brain development. Research indicates TV and computer screen time interferes with normal brain development at this critical stage. The American Academy of Pediatrics and other child development experts recommend zero screen time from birth through 2 years old, and limited to one to two hours of screen time per day after 2 years old.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE NEEDS

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Birth through age 5

*Great things happen
when adults consider what
children need to grow
and develop!*

NEEDS FROM PARENTS

- Understand child development basics.
- Understand how development impacts learning.
- Act as good role models for character development, self-esteem, and self-confidence.
- Consistently discipline based on logical consequences that the child can understand.
- Provide an intellectually stimulating and language-rich environment that follows his or her interests.
- Provide freedom of movement to explore indoors and outdoors, and to develop small and large muscle control.
- Treat everyday occurrences as learning opportunities that encourage independence, emphasize real experiences and limit fantasy.
- Understand and follow recommendations on screen time.
- Evaluate educational options available based on child development principles.

NEEDS FROM EDUCATORS

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of human development from birth to age 5 and its application to learning.
- Create an early learning environment that begins work with the end in mind; prepare from the first day to support parents in their endeavor to give children what they need for healthy development.
- Start early childhood instruction with the basics. Add more detail and higher-level ideas just ahead of children's skill levels.
- Employ early childhood educators and caregivers who provide intellectually stimulating and language-rich environments that include hands-on and real life learning that promotes independence and follows the interests of individual children.
- Provide freedom of movement to explore indoors and outdoors, and to develop small and large muscle control.

NEEDS FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Understand that good child and youth development equals a thriving community.
- Develop an overall plan to address their needs and build on their strengths—especially as they relate to the inclusion of young people in civic life.
- Provide fun, educational, and cultural opportunities for parents and their children.
- For organizations that interact with young children (YMCAs, youth sports, etc.), understand what children need to thrive at this age and employ adults who can be good role models for character development, self-esteem and self-confidence.



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