

Developmental Stages in Children's Play

Birth – 6 Months:

- Begins social play and interaction with caregivers (looking, smiling, moving, etc.)
- Plays with fingers (early eye-hand coordination)
- Holds and looks at small toys
- Reaches and grasps rattle
- Holds rattle with two hands; shakes rattle; places in and out of mouth

6 Months – 10 Months:

- Stretches to reach small toys and holds toys with both hands
- Passes toy from hand to hand
- Starts to look for toys hidden from view
- Drops toy and watches to see how and where it falls
- Bangs and slides toys on surfaces to see how this sounds
- Pokes objects with index fingers
- Holds toys between thumb and index finger
- Able to take wooden pegs/shapes out of holes

10 Months – 15 Months:

- Begins to pick up small objects using thumb and index finger
- Starts to show a hand preference
- Enjoys sound-making toys and repeats actions to make sounds
- Pushes and pulls large toys
- Imitates activities such as ringing a bell or rattling a spoon in a cup
- Enjoys imitating adult "play type" speech sounds
- Gives a toy to adult when asked (and sometimes spontaneously)
- Plays social games like Pat-a-cake
- Begins to show an interest in pictures

15 Months – 24 Months:

- Intense exploration of environment, especially looking in boxes, bags, drawers
- Develops more coordination in pincer grasp
- Holds a crayon and imitates scribbling
- Enjoys putting objects in and out of containers
- Enjoys brief times of pretend play with doll house, small dishes, etc.
- Enjoys Picture books, especially if with noises
- Enjoys nursery rhymes and will try to join in
- Points to body parts
- Uses single words and some short phrases

Year Two:

- Uses push and pull-along toys well
- Builds a tower of 6 – 7 blocks
- Draws by scribbling in circles; can imitate a straight line
- Recognizes fine details in picture books; names and turns pages
- Exhibits definite hand preference
- Rides and steers a small push-along toy using feet
- Asks names of people and objects constantly
- Puts two or more words together to form simple sentences
- Experiments with water, sand, play dough; not able to plan or produce final product
- Shows interest in pretend play
- Understands what miniature toys represent and how to play with them
- Early parallel play

Year Three:

- Matches shapes and three or more colors
- Copies a circle and very basic human figures with a head
- Cuts with scissors
- Enjoys wide variety of toys and materials
- Enjoys listening to stories
- Repeats nursery rhymes
- Participates in prolonged make-believe play – transitions into symbolic play
- Early stages of cooperative play

Years 4 – 5:

- Counts out 5 or more objects correctly
- Drawings become more detailed – arms, legs, body
- Climbs on equipment or trees
- Pedals a bike easily
- Enjoys building toys
- Completes more complicated jigsaw puzzles
- Plays well with miniature toys such as doll house, farm sets, etc.
- Enjoys early rule games
- Enjoys imitative play with peers, such as doctor, school, etc.

Years 5 – 8:

- Increased gender specific play
- Enjoys more organized games and activities, with increased focus upon rules
- Beginning team sports with usage of gross motor skills