

Young Children and Books

Please note: These are general statements. Each child develops differently.

Age in Months	What They Do	Books	Sharing Books	Early Literacy Behaviors
Birth – 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise their heads briefly, turn head side to side • Look around • By 2 or 3 months some control over head when they are supported • Things look fuzzy to them and they see best 8 – 12 inches from their eyes • Prefer patterns to solid colors, sharp contrast in brightness between design and background • Black or bright bold color on white background more interest than design in lighter color on white background • Cannot manipulate objects voluntarily with their hands but will grasp tightly a finger or other object placed in their hands—grasping reflex • By about 3 months they bring the object to their mouths to suck • They pay attention when you speak to them, especially if it is “parentese” style. • Cry, coo with vowel sounds coming first 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple large pictures or designs set against a contrasting background • Designed to stand up • Stiff cardboard books • Zig-zag pages • <i>Black on White</i> or <i>White on Black</i> by Tana Hoban • Books of individual nursery rhymes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to baby is of utmost importance • Display books with bright bold illustrations along side the crib • If baby likes to lie on the floor, book can be opened wide and placed on the floor • Allow baby to choose to focus on the pictures or not so s/he won't become overstimulated • Say nursery rhymes • Sing songs 	<p><u>Print Motivation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read with your child from birth • Read anything! • Read with a cheerful, clear voice • Don't worry if you child chews or bites on the book; “Oh this looks good, let's see what it is!” <p><u>Phonological Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk clearly and slowly • Sing songs; say rhymes <p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your child • Look at your child as you speak • Speak slowly, clearly, in short sentences • Speak using a slightly higher pitch <p><u>Narrative Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you talk with your child, remember to leave time for your child to “talk” or babble back • When your child coos or babbles, talk back to him/her
4 – 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become able to reach and grasp, if awkwardly • Into the mouth it goes! • Use hands to bang objects or wave them in the air • Starting to sit up freeing up both hands to manipulate objects • Add consonant sounds to their cooing • Engage in playful conversations (adult and child make sounds back and forth to each other) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple, bright pictures on contrasting background • Cloth books, soft vinyl books—easy to grasp and pick up, washable • Some cardboard books, but they may be a bit heavy for baby to handle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold baby and book now that the baby can hold up head • Know that babies will grab the book and may not listen long—that's fine! • Baby is getting to know books by chewing, sucking, shaking, and crumbling them. Books are one more thing to be explored. • Try sharing books with baby on your lap and a toy in baby's hand. • Babies enjoy listening to nursery rhymes, songs, fingerplays. 	<p><u>Print Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share board books with your child • Don't worry if your child chews or bites on the book <p><u>Letter Knowledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give your child opportunities to look at things that are both the same and different. They love to look at all different kinds of faces, for example. • Talk about things that are alike and different.

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7 – 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to bang, wave, shake objects, chew and mouth objects Start to throw and drop objects Transfer objects from hand to hand, so they can explore more fully Can hold an object easily with one hand while using the other to explore it. Can discern object qualities (soft, hard, smooth, rough, light, heavy, solid, touch, easily torn, etc.) Start to pick up smaller things with thumb and index finger (pincer grasp)—enables page turning! Point to object s/he wants Hear you name the object s/he points to Begin to crawl Pull up to standing position Babble/vocalize (da-da-da or ba-ba-ba) Search for object hidden under blanket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manipulate objects including books Begins to turn pages Board/stiff books easier to turn pages. Some called Chubby or Chunky books have pages that separate easily. Play with books (crush, rip) Small books to fit small hands Bright bold pictures of familiar things of interest to baby Naming objects and repeating helps develop vocabulary Books with rhymes/rhythmic language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby will sit longer in lap to share a book Point to pictures and say their names (labeling) Talk about the pictures Books with rhymes and rhythmic language Baby will turn the pages quickly or close the book Put books in baby's toy box, diaper bag, on the floor, where they can reach board books Let the baby take the book and point out pictures as you can Don't worry about trying to finish a book, just enjoy it together 	<p><u>Print Motivation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read with your child, with a cheerful, clear voice Don't worry if you child chews or bites on the book: "Let's see what the book says." <p><u>Phonological Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk clearly and slowly Sing songs; say rhymes <p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk with your child Look at your child as you speak Speak slowly, clearly, in short sentences Speak using a slightly higher pitch Use words you use in normal adult conversation <p><u>Narrative Skills:</u></p>
10 – 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More coordinated with hands, place large pegs in holes, manipulate toys Eat finger foods May try to walk, some do walk Find and bring objects and brings to you to play First word Understand more words than they can say Begin to connect objects and events (putting jacket on means going out so they go to the door) Know own name Know some animal sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning interested in book contents, not just the physical book Books with pictures of familiar actions and objects, animals Board books, not just Chunky ones, are best. (Some board books are more appropriate for older children.) Books with rhyme, rhythm, repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get child's attention with "Look" or "Look at this picture" Ask "What's that?" "What do you see?" Give answer if necessary. Give your child a chance to respond. Respond to the child's babbling or smile in a positive way, "Yes, that's a monkey." Let your child be the leader. Child is on the move, so have books around the whole house. Offer some structure like reading before or after nap or at bedtime. Point to animals and say sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As you talk with your child, remember to leave time for your child to "talk" or babble back When your child coos or babbles, talk back to him/her <p><u>Print Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share board books with your child Don't worry if your child chews or bites on the book Have some books that you don't mind getting beaten up. If your child throws a book down, pick it up and read it together. <p><u>Letter Knowledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about things that are the same and different—real things and pictures in books Talk about and feel different shapes.

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13 – 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say some words • Understand more words • May use one word to convey different things depending on how they say it • May put two words together • Use expressive jargon—nonsense words with speech-like sentences • Pretend play: objects for pretend activities, like dolls being rocked to sleep • Hum familiar songs • Say “No”; feel independent • “I” “me” “mine” • Make marks on paper with crayons • Use spoon • Drink from cup • Get frustrated easily • Like repetition • Short attention span 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books with clear pictures of familiar objects • Books with pictures of familiar characters, animals, food • Books with familiar experiences, faces, family, bedtime • Books of songs • Books with repeated rhymes, phrases • Books with simple stories • Books with pictures that show how a character is feeling • Flap books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name pictures and child will repeat what you say • Listen to you saying a few sentences about the pictures • Like animal books and try to imitate the sounds they make • Use expressive jargon as they turn the pages of a book • May chime in with familiar phrases • May be physically active while you read books, sometimes to show excitement • Talk about the feelings of the characters in book; relate to your child’s feelings • Like the same books repeated 	<p><u>Print Motivation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read with your child, with a cheerful, clear voice, over and over again • Don’t worry if you child throws the book down. Say, “Let’s see what the book says.” <p><u>Phonological Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing songs; say rhymes • Say animal and other sounds • Dance to music <p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your child • Look at your child as you speak • Speak slowly, clearly, in short sentences • Use words you use in normal adult conversation • Repeat unfamiliar words • Talk about feelings <p><u>Narrative Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you talk with your child, remember to leave time for your child to talk back • Talk about what is happening in books and relate to your child’s experiences • Encourage your child to talk too
19 - 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assert independence • Recognize photos of family/friends • Like things OWN way • Use spoon/fork • Run; throw ball • Dance • Sing • Help around house • Imitate what you do • Follow simple direction (“Put it in the box.”) • Follow two-step requests (Get your car and bring it here.) • Name several body parts • Make two or three word sentences • Like to repeat activities • Develop sense of humor • Sort shapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books with pictures of familiar characters, animals • Books with familiar experiences • Books of songs • Books with repeated rhymes, phrases • Books with simple stories • Books about colors, shapes • Books about feelings • Books on topics like transportation, ocean animals • Flap books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name pictures and child will repeat what you say • Listen to you saying a few sentences about the pictures • Like animal books and try to imitate the sounds they make • Use expressive jargon as they turn the pages of a book • May chime in with familiar phrases • May be physically active while you read books, sometimes to show excitement • Talk about the feelings of the characters in book; relate to your child’s feelings • Likes same books repeated 	<p><u>Print Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share books with your child • Have child turn pages • Point to words in title <p><u>Letter Knowledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about things that are the same and different—real things and pictures in books • Talk about and feel shapes. • Encourage scribbling • Sing alphabet song

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25 – 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afraid of dark, monsters • Can learn to talk about feelings • Care for others • Notice how people are alike and different • Pretend play • Play with other children, sharing sometimes • Put things in groups • Play with dough/clay • Scribble/draw • Say short sentences you can understand • Need time to respond to what you say/ask • Sing songs • Stack six blocks • Draw vertical line • Draw a circle, a cross • Know colors • Express feelings • Dress with loose clothing • Speech understood 75% of time • Show interest in particular things • Understands when things are not “right” (You don’t wear shoes on your ears.) • Have sense of humor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books with pictures of familiar characters, animals • Books that reflect their own experiences • Books with pictures depicting the action in the story • Pictures on each page • Books of songs • Books with repeated rhymes, phrases • Books with repeated phrase and/or repeated action • Books with stories • Books on topics that interest them • Books about concepts (opposites, spatial relationships, size, comparison, etc.) • Books about feelings • Books about their fears as a way of talking about them and reassuring them • True books on topics that interest them • Humorous/silly books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to you saying a few sentences about the pictures • Pretend reads books to you • Chime in with familiar phrases • May be physically active while you read books, sometimes to show excitement • Understand what is said in the book even if cannot say it • Ask “What” questions: “What is this?” or “What do you see on this page?” • Have favorite books they like to hear over and over again • Like to learn from books about topics that interest them • Repeat some of the new words in books • Turn pages • Listen to stories with plot • Listen to books, sometimes only for a short time 	<p><u>Print Motivation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read with your child, with a cheerful, clear voice • Stop when your child loses interest; don’t turn reading time into a power struggle. • Share books again when your child is in the mood <p><u>Phonological Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing songs; say rhymes • Read books that rhyme and say what words rhyme <p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your child; look at your child as you speak • Use words you use in normal adult conversation • Use lots of different words • Books have different words than conversation; use new words! <p><u>Narrative Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you talk with your child, remember to leave time for your child to “talk” back • Encourage your child to tell you things that happened and to tell you stories <p><u>Print Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share books with your child • Point to the words in the title as you read them • Let your child turn the pages <p><u>Letter Knowledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about things that are the same and different—real things and pictures in books • Talk about, feel and draw shapes. • Sing the alphabet song • Read some alphabet books together • Encourage scribbling and drawing

Based on information from:

Much More Than the ABCs: The Early Stages of Reading and Writing

by Judith A. Schickedanz (1999)

Building Literacy with Love by Betty Bardige and Marilyn Segal (2005)

Milestone Charts from www.babycenter.com

How I Grow charts from zerotothree.org

Early Literacy Skills from Every Child Ready to Read @ your library®

Print Motivation: a child’s interest in and enjoyment of books and reading

Phonological Awareness: ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words (rhyming, hearing words broken down into parts)

Vocabulary: knowing the names of things

Narrative Skills: ability to describe things and events, to retell stories (expressive language)

Print Awareness: knowing that print has meaning, how to handle a book, directions of print, environmental print

Letter Knowledge: same letter can look different, letters have names and are related to sounds