



Needs and Developmental Milestones

Early Childhood Education

Letter from the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services to the Parents / Caregivers -

Your care is so important to the development of our young children. The time you spend reading to, playing with, and talking with a young child is building his or her learning skills, in order to do well right from the start.

Today's kindergarten requires children to have many skills before they enter school. Research shows that to be ready for kindergarten, young children benefit from participating in early childhood education preschool programs.

In Los Angeles County there is a commitment to provide young children with the opportunity to attend quality preschool programs. Head Start and LAUP (Los Angeles Universal Preschool) programs are free to children under the supervision of the Department of Children and Family Services.

Each caregiver is being asked to enroll the 4-year-old children in his or her care into a preschool program.

The enhancement of school readiness skills dramatically improves a child's success in school and your help by enrolling the children in a preschool program in your community can make a significant difference for the children. Many three-year-old children may also qualify and benefit from preschool.

Contact the preschool program to learn about the birth dates for enrollment. You can also ask your Children's Social Worker for assistance.



Early Childhood Education / **PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS**

To be ready for kindergarten, young children must be able to recognize all letters; count to 20 or higher; write their first name; work in small groups; share an idea, experience, or give a description; jump, stand on one foot, and hop; cut with scissors; identify colors; and more. This is a lot for a young child but necessary to start the challenges of kindergarten, which include learning to read, developing math skills, and expanding classroom and social skills.

What are the benefits of having children attend preschool?

- ⇒ Children will be ready for kindergarten and school success.
- ⇒ Parents/caregivers become engaged with the school and the children.
- ⇒ Families can learn about and connect with community resources.

MANY PROGRAMS HAVE SPANISH SPEAKING SERVICES AVAILABLE.

Early Childhood Education / PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS:

Check out the following resources to enroll the children in your care:

1—Head Start Early Childhood Education Programs are federally funded to serve children 3.9 years. ALL FOSTER CARE CHILDREN QUALIFY and have priority in the programs at no cost to the caregiver. Locate a Head Start Program by checking the Los Angeles County Office of Education Website at <http://156.3.254.236/orgs/286/index.cfm> or call (562) 940-1770 or check the attached list for additional agencies.

2 - LAUP (Los Angeles Universal Preschool) has waived the fees for 4-year-old preschoolers in foster care! Check the LAUP Website at <http://www.laup.net> or call (310) 568-9430 to review the list of preschools throughout the County of Los Angeles included in the program.

3 - For Licensed State-funded Child Care programs are located throughout Los Angeles County. Many have reduced or no fees for children in foster care. Some State Preschool Programs operate full day programs. Check the Website at <http://childcare.co.la.ca.us>.

4—Licensed child care programs throughout California, check the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Many have reduced or no fees for children in foster care. Check the Website at http://www.rrnetwork.org/rrnet/resources_and_links or call (800) 543-7793.

5—Child Care Connector can help you locate quality child care in your area. Check the Website at <http://www.childcareaware.org> or call (800) 424-2246.

6—Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPIY) is a free home based, parent involved, school readiness program for three, four, and five-year old children in Family Maintenance and Family Reunification plans. Children must live in the Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles, Compton, Santa Monica, Downey, and the city and/or unincorporated areas of Pasadena. Parent(s) or foster parent(s) are trained to provide educational enrichment to prepare their children to succeed in school. For more information check the Website at http://www.cahippy.org/hippy_sites.htm or call (619) 264-1554.

7 —Healthy City community resource directory for social services in Los Angeles County at <http://www.healthycity.org> or call (213) 989-1300.

What is in a Good Child Care Program?

- ✓ The Child Care center is licensed.
- ✓ The Child Care staff are caring and alert to the needs of every child.
- ✓ The caregiver can meet your child's needs.
- ✓ The caregiver talks with the child to support language development.
- ✓ All areas are clean and **SAFE**.
- ✓ All equipment is appropriate for a young child.
- ✓ All toys and activities are appropriate for the child's development.
- ✓ A routine is established for rest and play.

**ENROLL CHILDREN IN
PRESCHOOL
to be ready for
Kindergarten**



HEAD START PROGRAMS

(Additional Head Start Programs Not Affiliated
with LACOE that may be in your community)



University of Southern California
School for Early Childhood Education
509 W. 29th Street
Los Angeles 90007
213 743-4653

California Hospital Medical Center
1401 S. Grand Avenue
Leavey Hall
Los Angeles 90015
213 742-6385

Children's Institute International
711 S. New Hampshire Avenue
Los Angeles 9005
213 8078-1842

Venice Family Clinic
604 Rose Avenue
Venice 90291
310 664-7557

Long Beach Unified School District
Head Start Program
2898 Orange Avenue
Signal Hills 90806
562 427-0833

Options Head Start
1330 Potrero Avenue
South El Monte 91733-3085
626 459-4299

Center for Community and Family Services
Head Start
508 E. Mendocino Avenue
Altadena 91001
626 585-6506

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine
and Science, Project Head Start
135 W. Victoria Street
Long Beach 90805
310 605-0164 ext. 256

El Nido Early Head Start
2152 W. Manchester Avenue
Los Angeles 90047
323 971-7360

Vista del Mar Family Services
Early Head Start
6926 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles 90038
323 934-7979

Infant, Toddler, and Preschooler Needs -

WHAT DOES A YOUNG CHILD NEED?

EVERYTHING...

Young children need caregivers to help them stay safe, grow up healthy and ready to learn.

A young child needs your help to meet his or her:

- **PHYSICAL NEEDS**
Have healthy food, clothing, a safe, clean place to live, protection from harm, and keeping your child clean
- **EMOTIONAL NEEDS**
Feel your care, security, love, encouragement and hope

- **SOCIAL NEEDS**
Interact with you and others, as well as time to play with children the same age
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS**
Know that the child is important to you, has opportunities learn about his / her own likes and dislikes, and your support to develop a positive self-esteem
- **SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS**
Learn by talking with you, listening to a book being read to the child, and playing with your child to build language skills

How Can the Birth Parent / Caregiver Help the Young Child Learn?

YOU are the child's first teacher and some of the lessons you teach relate to...

Learning to TRUST others is *vital* to babies under one year. They need to develop a sense of trust of others; knowing you will meet their needs.

BASIC NEED: For responsive, sensitive caregivers respond to the babies, needs' learn the baby's rhythms—when to eat, when to sleep, desires to play and interact.

Trust is born from nurturing, love, care, security, and smiles toward the baby met by a consistent caregiver.

Learning to be INDEPENDENT - Toddlers have a natural desire to explore and begin to test their independence. Help the toddler explore within the safe limits of your supervision. Caregivers need to limit saying "no—no" to the child too many times or not use any harsh correction. When the toddler says "NO" to your request it is a normal part of development. Toddlers are learning to identify what they want and have some control to express themselves. This very helpful during toilet training.

BASIC NEED: For the caregiver to provide a safe environment with supervision and encouragement

**BABIES ARE FRAGILE.
PLEASE DON'T SHAKE A CHILD.**



for the child to explore. Engages the child in play, conversation, singing, and activities that expand learning. Young children learn from infancy about the world. Many of the lessons that last a lifetime are taught by the caregiver.

Learning to be CREATIVE —Preschoolers begin to learn skills through play; use their imagination; share and play with others; increase in their ability to follow directions; gain new skills; feel capable to learn, yet still require your careful supervision. As the preschooler gains new skills, he or she begins to feel capable to learn and gains the confidence to try new things.

BASIC NEED: A caregiver as the significant person who provides the child opportunities to experience new things, like going to story time at the library; visiting the neighborhood park; coloring on large pieces of blank paper; playing with pots and pans, puzzles, and other interactive toys.

Developmental Screening: Birth to 36 Months

Very young children, ages birth to three years are required to have developmental screenings. The developmental screening is part of the process to provide early intervention services to ensure young children have the help they need. This is in collaboration with the health care providers.

Who performs the developmental screening?

The caregiver shares insights about the child with the physician and / or developmental specialist. The caregiver may be provided a questionnaire to obtain information about how the child is developing and meeting milestones.

At what ages does the child have a developmental screening?

At any age when the young child enters the foster care system or on a schedule of birth, 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, 24 months, 30 months, and 36 months.



Developmental Red Flag Alerts

These are things that you will need to watch carefully. Your child may need extra help. Get HELP for your child if you see things on this list happening over and over.

INFANTS under 6 months

- Not gaining weight
- Unable to make eye contact or follow objects
- Unable to hold his/her head up
- Unable to hold things in hands
- No response to loud noises

INFANTS 9 to 12 months

- Not crawling
- Not able to stand when supported
- Not using gestures, like "wave" goodbye
- Not interacting with others by smiling, cooing, and showing interest in play

TODDLER 18 to 24 months

- Not saying single words, like "mama"
- Not able to walk
- Excessive body rocking
- Sleep disturbance

What is the purpose of the developmental screening?

It is a tool to identify if the young child is able to meet age-appropriate developmental milestones or needs a more comprehensive developmental assessment.

Where is a developmental assessment performed?

Specialists in Regional Centers throughout the County of Los Angeles assess the child's development and develop an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) with the caregiver.

(<http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/RCLookup.cfm> Website to locate Regional Center by zip code.)

Where are the developmental services provided?

Most services are provided in the caregiver's home. Some services like occupational therapy may require going to a facility near the caregiver's home.

If the child is receiving services, what happens when the child is three years old?

The child transfers to the local school district for an assessment and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. If the child qualifies for special education services, the school district will arrange for school based services.

THREE-YEAR-OLDS

- Frequent falling and difficulty with stairs
- Not able to build a tower of more than four blocks
- Inability to communicate in three word sentences
- Little interest in other children

FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

- Cannot hold a crayon between thumb and finger
- Shows no interest in playing games with others
- Does not say a sentence of more than three words
- Gets angry or upset and cannot stop

FIVE-YEAR-OLDS

- Cannot talk about what he or she did today
- Very unhappy or sad much of the time
- Extremely aggressive
- Not able to focus for more than five minutes on one activity
- Shows no interest in playing with children

What to do when you see RED FLAG ALERTS?

- ⇒ Take your child to the doctor. Talk to the doctor about what you see. Ask for help.
- ⇒ Talk with your child care providers about what you see. Ask for help.
- ⇒ Talk to the neighborhood elementary school about what you see. Ask for your child to be assessed.

WHERE ARE THE REGIONAL CENTERS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY?

There are seven Regional Centers throughout Los Angeles County.

Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center

1000 South Fremont
Alhambra, CA 91802-7916
(626) 299-4700

Service Areas:

Eastern Los Angeles County including Alhambra and Whittier

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center

3303 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 383-1300

Service Areas:

Central Los Angeles County including Burbank, Glendale, and Pasadena

Harbor Regional Center

21231 Hawthorne Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503
(310) 540-1711

Service Areas:

Southern Los Angeles County including Bellflower, Harbor, Long Beach, and Torrance

North Los Angeles County Regional Center

15400 Sherman Way, Suite 170
Van Nuys, CA 91406-4211
(818) 778-1900

Service Areas:

Northern Los Angeles County including San Fernando and Antelope Valleys

San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center

761 Corporate Center Drive
Pomona, CA 91768
(909) 620-7722

Service Areas:

Eastern Los Angeles County including El Monte, Monrovia, Pomona, and Glendora

South Central Los Angeles Regional Center

650 West Adams Boulevard, Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA 90007-2545
(213) 744-7000

Service Areas:

Southern Los Angeles County including Compton and Gardena

Westside Regional Center

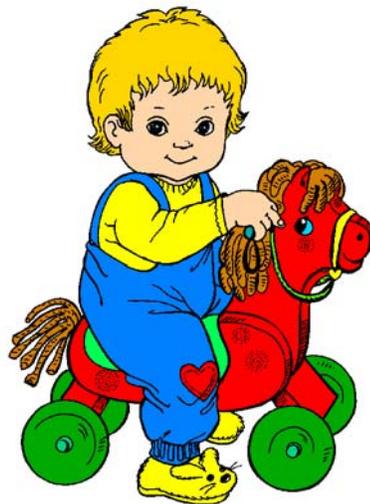
5901 Green Valley Circle, Suite 320
Culver City, CA 90230-6953
(310) 258-4000

Service Areas:

Western Los Angeles County including Culver City, Inglewood, and Santa Monica

Regional Centers are contracted by the State's Department of Development Services (DDS), which is the lead agency responsible for California's Early Start Program.

To access Regional Centers in other counties check the website at <http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/RCLookup.cfm>



Caregivers and Young Children: Ages Three to Five Years

Children are learning at all ages. They need to learn and develop school readiness skills and early childhood education and / or quality child care programs can help.

- Every child, ages three-to-five years, under the supervision of the Department of Children and Family Services is to continue having Developmental Screening at regular well child medical check-ups.
- Many young children benefit from early childhood education programs / quality child care.
- **Caregivers are encouraged to enroll all four-year-olds in early childhood education programs, like Head Start, LAUP, and other licensed providers.**
- It is helpful to provide the child a tour of a new school and introduce the child to new teachers, school helpers, and future friends to help the child in transitioning outside the home or to a new school.
- At age three years, any children receiving services through Regional Center, under IDEA Part C, must be reassessed. The local school district special education program will be responsible to provide services if the child meets the eligibility requirements under IDEA.
- You will need to share the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) with the local school district. A new assessment will be done to determine if the child still needs services or if the child has reached skills equal to other children his or her age.
- If it is decided the child needs additional support then services are provided free of charge and often at local schools.
- To ensure the child receives all the services, it is important for the child to attend each scheduled appointment. If the child is too ill to participate in school, call the school to notify them of the reason.

- Every child must have all the required immunizations to enter school.
- All preschool children need books, blocks, age appropriate toys, and learning supplies in the home.
- For the child to gain the maximum benefits from the educational program, the child must attend consistently.
- Provide educational stability by keeping the child in the same school until ready to transition to elementary school.
- It is important to the child and his or her learning to have the caregiver participate at the school and on field trips.
- Take the child to the library to borrow books and participate in story time as often as possible.
- Provide transportation to activities to enhance the child's learning and social development.
- Instill the love of learning in the child by going to parks, museums, the beach, and other places for the child to explore.
- Attend caregiver training to expand your knowledge and gain access to new resources in the community.
- Read to the child daily, even to young children. It builds their language skills and provides a special time with you.
- Give the child encouragement when he or she is learning new skills.



READ to a child, even a baby, to build his or her literacy skills.

Suggested Checklist for Kindergarten Readiness

The Child Should Know These:

- √ Recognize eight basic colors
- √ Recognize shapes
- √ Recognize first and last name
- √ Cut on simple lines
- √ Say alphabet
- √ Say letter sounds using a picture guide
- √ Recognize some letters, especially the ones in own name
- √ Recognize number 1–10 (out of order)
- √ Print first name
- √ Say days of the week
- √ Recognize rhyming words
- √ Name eight opposites (big/little, up/down, etc.)
- √ Follow two-step directions
- √ Fasten or unfasten child's clothes
- √ Say or show age
- √ Use the restroom and wash hands
- √ Name 10 simple pictures
- √ Tear, cut, and paste
- √ Draw a simple object
- √ Color within a large spatial design

- √ Know the difference between letters and numbers
- √ Sing songs or nursery rhymes
- √ Pretend to read a book
- √ Draw a picture related to a book or topic studied
- √ Sit still to listen to story
- √ Count to at least 10



The Child Should be Learning These:

- √ Say phone number
- √ Say address
- √ Say birthday day/month
- √ Print last name
- √ Say months of the year
- √ Read color words
- √ Count to 25
- √ Print numbers 1–20
- √ Print lower case letters
- √ Print capital letters
- √ Reads beginning letter sounds
- √ Name 5 senses (see, hear, smell, touch, and taste)

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Things to do together:

TALK (even to a baby)

READ books

*PLAY with blocks, balls, trikes, puppets,
and more*

DRAW (big crayons)

Teach a SONG ...

Have FUN learning
with a child

If you need help or information:

- ⇒ Discuss your medical or developmental concerns with your child's doctor.
- ⇒ If your child is within the birth to three years range, contact the local Regional Center to share your concerns and ask for an assessment.
- ⇒ If your child is within the three-to-five year range, with disabilities contact the local school principal near your home to request educational resources or an assessment.
- ⇒ Share your concern with the Children's Social Worker and / or the preschool teacher.
- ⇒ Talk with the child's Dependency Court Attorney.
- ⇒ Check the computer network or go to the local library to gather information about specific concerns.
- ⇒ Check Department of Children and Family Services public website at <http://www.dcfcs.co.la.ca.us>

Helping Your Children BECOME READERS

When you open a book with your child,
you are opening the world for them.

You are making them think and wonder, and want to know more.

You are helping them to do well in school.

Best of all you are enjoying time together as a family.

Here are ways to interest your little ones in books and help them learn skills that will lead to reading.

- ✓ **Talk with your children** as you play, shop, or work around the house. Listen to what they say. Ask questions. When you talk to your children, you are helping them learn to use words.
- ✓ **Read to your children.** Try to read to them at the same time every day. Bedtime or before a nap is a good time. Let them choose the story.
- ✓ **Let your children see you read.** That is the best way to show them that you think reading is important and that you enjoy it, too.
- ✓ **Ask older children to read to younger ones.** The older children will be proud of their skills. The younger children will want to read like their older brothers, sisters, or friends.
- ✓ **Go to the library together.** Ask the librarian for help in finding books your children will enjoy. If you don't have a library card, ask for one. With a card, your family can borrow books.
- ✓ **Keep books, magazines and newspapers around your home** so you and your children will always have something to read. Read aloud other things you see during the day. Read street signs, milk cartons, cereal boxes, and signs in store windows.
- ✓ **Give your children books about their special interests.** Do they like animals, sports, or magic? Surprise them with books or magazines about their favorite interests or activities.
- ✓ **Plan outings for your children.** Children learn from what they see and do. Take them to a park or a parade, or just out for a walk. Church and community groups also plan trips that your family might want to go on.
- ✓ **Say rhymes and poetry, or sing songs.** Rhymes and songs are easy for kids to remember, so they can say them and sing them along with the rest of the family. Rhymes also help them learn letter sounds.
- ✓ **Tell stories about your family** and stories you enjoyed when you were a child. Ask grandparents and other family members to tell stories, too. Write down some of these stories and the ones your children tell. Save them to read aloud at another time.



If you are interested in more ideas and advice about encouraging children to read, visit Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. website at www.rif.org.
