# Toddler Milestones Language and Literacy Development

## 1. Receptive Language

- A. Responds to spoken words
  - 1. Looks at an object named
  - 2. Picks up or points to an object named
  - Uses actions to show understanding (goes to table when asked, "Are you hungry?"
  - 4. Appropriately indicates "yes," or "no" in response to questions

#### B. Follows directions

- 1. Follows simple one-step requests ("Give me the ball, please")
- 2. Follows simple directions using the following words: in, up, down, over, and under ("Put the doll under the bed.")
- 3. Follows two-step directions ("Please pick up your coat and bring it to me.")
- 4. Thinks through steps to meet a simple request, such as throwing away the napkin and putting the spoon in the bucket when asked to "clean-up" after lunch.

#### 2. Expressive Language

- A. Communicates without words
  - 1. Uses physical signals and body language to send a message
  - 2. Uses facial expressions to send a message

#### B. Demonstrates oral language skills

- 1. Babbles strings of word-like sounds
- 2. Names objects and familiar people using one word
- 3. Communicates a message with one word ("more," "up")
- 4. Combines words and gestures (says "bye-bye" and waves)
- 5. Refers to self as "me"
- 6. Uses some plurals that end in "s" (dogs, cars)
- 7. Says first and last name
- 8. Uses some describing words such as "pretty flowers," and "big truck"
- 9. Answers "who," "what" and "where" questions

#### C. Uses oral language in social situations

- 1. Points, gestures and make sounds to indicate a desire
- 2. Uses one word greetings ("hi" or "bye")
- 3. Says "yes" and "no" to let adults know what they want

- 4. Makes word-like sounds back and forth with an adult to have a "conversation"
- 5. Talks on the telephone
- 6. Asks for help when needed
- 7. Talks back and forth with an adult
- 8. Uses some polite language such as "please" and "thank you"
- 9. Tells about some events that happened
- 10. Speaks clearly enough for most adults to understand

### D. Uses oral language for creative expression

- 1. Makes word-like sounds while playing
- 2. Makes animal sounds while playing
- 3. Makes sounds of objects, such as cars and trucks, while playing
- 4. Pretends to talk on the telephone
- 5. Sings, using sounds and a few words
- 6. Imitates adult voices
- 7. Uses language in playful ways
- 8. Begins to make up simple stories

#### E. Asks questions

- 1. Uses physical signals to ask a question such as pushing a stroller to the door to express "can we go out?"
- Uses one word to ask a question "nana" to ask "can I have a banana?"
- 3. Begins to use two words to ask a question ("more milk?")
- 4. Asks questions such as "what's that?"
- 5. Joins another child to signal they are asking to play
- 6. Asks to play with others
- 7. Asks a few simple questions which may wander from topic to topic

#### 3. Foundations for Reading

- A. Listens to stories and begins to follow what happens
  - 1. Makes pleasant sounds when an adult shows pictures in a short book
  - 2. Watches finger-plays and begins to copy movements
  - 3. Sits on adults lap to listen briefly to a story
  - 4. Finds a real object similar to one in a story
  - 5. Points to pictures in a story and names them
  - 6. Says a familiar word that is repeated in a story
  - 7. Tells what happens next in a familiar story
  - 8. Asks an adult to read a favorite story

- 9. Repeats phrases that are familiar in a story
- 10. Listens to a brief story they find interesting

#### B. Shows beginning book awareness

- 1. Carries a book around with them
- 2. Brings a book to an adult to read to them
- 3. Turns pages in cloth or board books
- 4. Points to a few pictures while looking through a book
- 5. Turns a book right side up when it is upside down
- 6. Turns pages in a board book easily
- 7. Looks through a picture book as if reading it
- 8. Identifies a favorite book by its cover
- 9. Enjoys spending time looking at books

#### C. Becomes aware of pictures and symbols in print

- 1. Points to pictures of familiar objects when asked
- 2. Says names of familiar objects when asked "what's that?"
- 3. Identifies a familiar item, such as a cereal box ("Cheerios") based on its logo
- 4. Names a restaurant or other location based on its sign or logo
- 5. Recognizes familiar symbols such as a stop sign
- 6. Looks at picture message with an adult such as a picture (rebus) recipe
- 7. Shows interest in alphabet blocks and magnetic letters

#### D. Begins to distinguish the different sounds of language

- 1. Sings simple rhyming songs
- 2. Tries to repeat a nursery rhyme
- 3. Repeats words to a finger-play

#### 4. Foundations for Writing

#### A. Scribbles

- 1. Makes random marks on paper with a fat crayon
- 2. Makes dots on paper with a marker
- 3. Imitates others they see writing or drawing
- 4. Makes different marks that begin to look like lines or circles
- 5. Explores how to use markers, crayons, chalk or other writing tools

#### B. Draws pictures

1. Makes circular shapes and lines and gives these markings a name ("my car")

## 2. Tells about their drawings

# C. Dictates message

- 1. Asks an adult to write their name on their work
- 2. Asks an adult to write simple words for them such as "Happy Birthday"
- D. Expresses creativity using writing skills
  - 1. Makes scribbles and dots in creative materials such as sand or finger-paint
  - 2. Draws with sticks in the dirt