

Cognitive Development

- There is a significant amount of brain development from birth to age 7. During kindergarten, children will begin to solidify their thinking.
- Children learn best in an environment that is stimulating and supportive.
- In kindergarten, they will start to understand patterns, part/whole relationships, and will be excited to learn new things.
- Children at this age can be scared of things (like monsters or the dark) because their brains are still learning the difference between fantasy and reality.
- When teaching them, it is best to have concrete ideas and objects for the children; abstract thought is difficult for children this age.
- During this time of development, a child is "egocentric." Egocentrism can be interpreted as "selfishness;" however, it is developmentally appropriate for kindergarten children to not see a different perspective or point of view other than their own. They tend to view the world as if it rotates around just them.

We can:

- Play games with them that require thinking (puzzles, matching games, and counting games).
- Teach math concepts (counting, numbers and writing them) by giving them real objects to count and manipulate.
- Ask comparing questions like, "Which one has more...which one has less?"
- Talk about things they can see and interact with rather than "picture it in your mind."
- Play "I Spy" games or riddles to help them with problem solving or finding things to identify in their environment.

Literacy and Language Development

- Literacy skills and oral language development go hand in hand. Children are learning letters, sounds, and how to put these together to make words.
- They love to read and often will memorize favorite stories. They will also look at the pictures in these stories to help them "read." These are all examples of a developing reader.
- Conversations with others are important to help children express thoughts and make their own stories.

We can:

- READ! Read with your child every day. They will soon begin to memorize pictures and the story, this will develop into learning letters, sounds and words.
- Ask them to find letters in their environment (cereal boxes, street signs, or on clothing).
- Play rhyming games or games where they have to change letters in words. For example, "If cat started with a "T" it would be Tat!...and that is silly!"
- Have them tell you stories or draw pictures to express their thoughts.
- Ask questions when they are talking to you; have them describe details of their thoughts.
- Model for them how to take turns listening and speaking.
- Teach them how to write their name.
- Visit the library and check out books to read. After reading stories, ask the child questions about it.
- Children this age love repetition; read their favorite books over and over.

*Copple, C., Bredekamp, S. (2009); Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs



Understanding Ages & Stages

• Kindergarten



Granite School District
From here anything's possible!



Developmental Stages

Kindergarten introduces children and parents to the public school experience. This year will set the tone for all future learning. The kindergarten year is crucial to laying a foundation of positive self esteem and a love of learning.

At this age children "have common attributes such as enthusiasm for learning, an increased ability to integrate information and inhibit impulses, and a captivating interest in interacting with others, all of which makes them ready for a new phase in their education." *

Kindergarten children learn by doing and need to be active in the learning process. Children enter school with an excitement and enthusiasm for learning, but there are many areas where children might be frustrated with tasks too difficult for their growing brains and bodies. Our goal is to have teachers and parents understand these developmental ages and stages to support their kindergarten children for optimal social, emotional, and academic growth.

It is our goal to share information with you to help all children succeed. This information is a "general" development continuum; so it is important to remember that each child develops at his/her own pace. This information is organized to explain the developmental stage, give examples of the stage, then provide ideas and ways parents and caregivers can support their children.

Physical Development

- There are two types of motor development to be aware of in growing children, *fine motor* and *gross motor*.
- Fine motor skills need coordination of small muscle movements—usually involving the synchronization of hands and fingers—with the eyes. Examples are: zipping, holding a pencil, picking up small items (like pennies) and tying shoes.
- Gross motor skills come from large muscle groups and whole body movement. Examples are running, standing, catching a ball, and balancing.
- Typically, in kindergarten, girls are more advanced with fine motor skills and boys tend to do better with gross motor skills.
- "A child's attention span usually lengthens during kindergarten, and many children initially struggle with tasks that require detail, patience, and steadiness." *

We can:

- Engage in various activities for your child to practice both fine and gross motor skills.
- Provide fine motor activities such as: playing with play dough, coloring, putting a puzzle together, writing and cutting with scissors.
- Interact using gross motor skills like: running, standing on one foot, hopping, and catching a large ball.
- Be patient. Coordination is developing so some tasks may be difficult for them to complete.



Social and Emotional Development

- "The ability to form and sustain relationships with others, both with adults and children, is central to a child's social development." *
- Examples of positive social behaviors children learn in the kindergarten year include: cooperating, resolving conflicts with peers in positive ways, following classroom rules and adult requests, and helping others.
- Children do best with following rules and showing cooperative behaviors in environments with clear, simple expectations as well as consistent rules and consequences.
- Kindergartners learn best when they feel valued, needed, and loved by the teacher and other positive adults in their life. They will gain social confidence when their basic needs are met promptly and positive social interactions with other adults are modeled appropriately.

We can:

- Provide clear expectations and rules for your child and be consistent in enforcing them.
- Be patient with your child when he/she struggles to understand social interactions or reacts inappropriately to others. (i.e. hitting, pushing, or not taking turns)
- Model correct social behaviors and suggest ways for your child to act in a positive social manner.
- Praise your child for right choices. Teach them to help others and help them learn friendly behaviors.
- Talk to your child about their day, encourage them to talk about their feelings.
- Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children. Encourage them to play games that teach them to take turns and how to win or lose.