



# Handy Handouts®

Free, educational handouts for teachers and parents\*

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## What are Developmental Domains?

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From the moment of birth, children begin exploring their new world by touching, smelling, tasting, listening, observing, and playing. Through this constant exploration, they are rapidly developing the “domains” of their physical and mental abilities. The simplest of activities at every age level promotes stimulation and growth in their cognitive, social, language, and physical (fine and gross motor) skills. These four domains develop all at the same time.



**Cognitive Development** is learning and processing of information – our thinking and knowing. Cognition involves language, imagination, thinking, reasoning, problem solving, and memory. Our cognitive skills help us organize what we know and generalize that knowledge into other areas. School teachers understand how children learn and process information; therefore, they can recognize a breakdown in cognition. When a red flag appears, teachers may refer a child for an evaluation to pinpoint the breakdown – and the sooner, the better. This child may have a learning disability or some other deficit that needs attention. Help your child develop cognitive skills from an early age by having him/her work with puzzles, blocks, peg games, card games, patterns, and cause and effect activities.

**Language Development** is learning to express ourselves in order to communicate with others. We learn to express ourselves by learning sounds, combining those sounds into meaningful words, and putting words together into sentences to communicate our thoughts. Then we are able to interpret sounds from others. Talking to our children before they can talk, engaging children in conversation (even when they are just beginning to talk), and exposing children to books and reading to them are instrumental in developing later literacy and language skills. Reading, talking, and singing to children from birth, and providing books and language videos or DVDs for them when they are older will help children develop important language skills.

**Social Development** is learning to like ourselves and to get along with others. Being in an active environment teaches us to share, take turns, accept the differences in others, include others in play/ conversation, and the list goes on. Just by watching others interact, children learn valuable social skills. That is why the examples we set and the behaviors we display are important. Children are always watching and copying what they see others do.

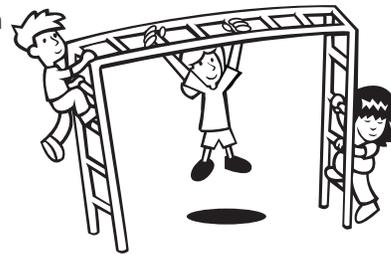
Unfortunately, some children may develop serious emotional or personality problems at some point. These problems include symptoms of extreme anxiety, withdrawal, and fearfulness; or, on the other hand, disobedience, aggression, and destruction of property. If parents suspect their child's social development is not going well (compared to his/her peers), discuss your observations with your family doctor or school counselor. From an early age, having your child interact with other children and adults as much as possible is the best way to help him/her develop socially. Playing games, having conversations in the car or at the dinner table, playing with friends, having parties, going out to eat, etc. are all invaluable ways to foster social development.

**Physical Development** falls into two categories – fine motor and gross motor skills. Fine Motor skills are activities occurring with the fingers in coordination with the eyes, such as reaching, grasping, releasing, and turning the wrist. These small muscle movements don't develop overnight, but with time and practice. Fine motor skills help us perform tasks for daily living, such as dressing, eating, toileting and washing. In the early childhood years, children become independent and learn to dress and undress themselves without assistance; use utensils for eating; and pour liquid without assistance.



The fingers learn to move in harmony and become strong enough to fasten buttons and snaps; and movement in the wrists helps take care of toileting.

Activities to promote fine motor control include: putting together puzzles with small pieces, peg board games, painting, drawing, cutting, stringing and lacing activities, construction and building sets like Legos®, Lincoln Logs®, buttons, snaps, and tying.



**Gross Motor Development** involves the larger muscles in the arms, legs, and torso. Gross motor activities include walking, running, throwing, lifting, kicking, etc. These skills relate to body awareness, reaction speed, balance, and strength. Gross motor development allows your child to move and control his/her body in different ways. It promotes your child's confidence and self-esteem and allows the body to perform multiple demands beyond simple muscle movements.

At home or in the classroom environment, have children practice: walking on their toes or heels; walking with toes pointed in or out; walking or moving like a certain animal (crab, worm, bear, bunny, frog, elephant, gorilla, kangaroo, etc.); playing kickball, tetherball, volleyball, basketball, or skating; swinging, sliding, climbing on monkey bars, or playing on a tire swing; balancing while walking along a curb; walking forward, backward, sideways, and heel-to-toe; walking while balancing a book on the head; jumping, hopping, crawling, rolling, doing jumping jacks, and jumping over obstacles. Participating in sports groups help develop gross motor skills as well as cognition, as many sports require thinking and planning where and what their body needs to do next.

#### Resources

Bright Tots. (2012). *Developmental domains*. Retrieved from <http://www.brighttots.com/domains>

Teach Preschool. (2012). *A brief look at developmental domains in early childhood education*. Retrieved from <http://www.teachpreschool.org/2010/07/a-brief-look-at-developmental-domains-in-early-childhood-education/>

Livestrong. The Limitless Potential of You (2012). *Five domains for early childhood development*. Retrieved from <http://www.livestrong.com/article/156820-five-domains-for-early-childhood-development/#ixzz1jLW65N1g>

**For more Handy Handouts®, go to [www.handyhandouts.com](http://www.handyhandouts.com).**

### Helpful Products

The list of Super Duper® products below may be helpful when working with children who have special needs. Visit [www.superduperinc.com](http://www.superduperinc.com) and type in the item name or number in our search engine. Click the links below to see the product descriptions.

*All About You, All About Me Fun Deck®*  
[Item # FD-80](#)

*Topic Talk™*  
[Item # GB-192](#)

*The Question Challenge Game*  
[Item # GB-42](#)

*Fine Motor Fun Deck®*  
[Item # FD-105](#)

*Body Awareness Fun Deck®*  
[Item # FD-120](#)

*Upper Body and Core Strength Fun Deck®*  
[Item # FD-106](#)

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