

Handy Handouts®

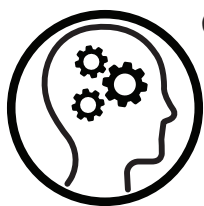
Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

What are Developmental Domains?

by Becky L. Spivey, M.Ed.



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 the 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
- 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,

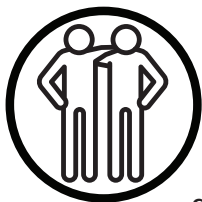
and putting words together into sentences to communicate our thoughts. Then we are able to interpret sounds from others.

Help your child develop important language and literacy skills by:

- talking and singing to your child, even before he/she can talk.
- engaging your child in conversation, even when he/she just beginning to talk
- exposing your child to books and reading to him/her
- providing books and language videos or DVDs for them when they are older

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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.

Some children may develop emotional or behavioral problems at some point. These problems might include symptoms of anxiety, withdrawal, and fearfulness; or, on the other hand, disobedience, aggression, and destruction of property. If you have concerns about your child's social development, discuss your observations with your family doctor or school counselor.

Invaluable ways to foster social development are:

- having your child interact with other children and adults as much as possible
- playing games
- having conversations in the car or at the dinner table
- playing with friends
- having parties
- going out to eat

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 liquids 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, and kicking. These skills relate to body

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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 line (such as a line drawn with chalk)
- 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 cognitive and social skills. Many sports require thinking and planning what the body needs to do next as well as an understanding of the rules of the game and the social skills needed for participating on a team.

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>

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