

# Helping Your Child Grow

*A Parent Guide for Children  
Three to Five Years*

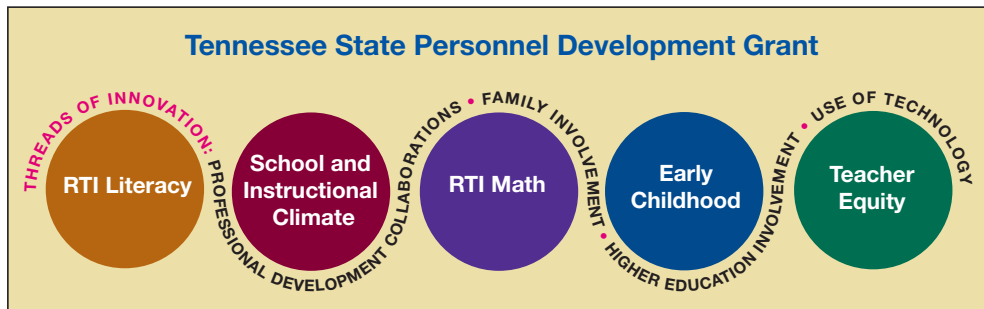




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Complete copies of the Tennessee Early Learning Standards are available at:  
<http://www.state.tn.us/education/ci/earlychildhood/index.shtml>

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UNDERSTANDING THE TENNESSEE EARLY LEARNING DEVELOPMENTAL STANDARDS

# Helping Your Child Grow

## Understanding the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards

Tennessee created a set of Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN ELDS) in 2004 to help all adults who care for children across the state understand appropriate practices for caring for children from birth to age five. The standards were developed to show the continuum of developmental milestones from birth to age five based on the research about process, sequences, and long term consequences of early learning and development. Representatives for several agencies worked together on these standards to produce one document that could be used by any adult responsible for the care and education of young children. Recently, the TN ELDS have become mandatory for use in Tennessee by all state-licensed child care providers in planning curriculum and learning experiences for the children in their care.

This guidebook was created to help families and caregivers understand the TN Early Learning Standards — what they mean and what can be done to help children learn and grow. Because children learn in more than one way and because learning affects several areas at a time, each section addresses the following areas of learning:

- **Social/Emotional** – The ability to develop relationships with others, to develop self-awareness and self-confidence, and to understand and cope with feelings.
- **Physical** – Development of Fine (small) and Gross (large) Motor Skills. The ability to move large and small muscles.

- **Cognitive** – Gaining knowledge, learning to reason, and solving problems in daily life.
- **Speech and Language** – Talking, listening, reading, writing, and singing are all creative ways to build speech and language.

The TN Early Learning Developmental Standards are broken into seven areas of learning. However, to simplify the early learning standards and make them easier to understand, this guidebook has consolidated the seven areas into four sections, as illustrated on the next page.

Instead of mentioning specific ages, children are classified as:

- **Young preschoolers** – three years old to four years old
- **Older preschoolers** – four years old to five years old

In this book, we provide some at-home activity ideas to support your child's development in each of the areas covered by the TN ELDS. Each area includes standards at different ages from 3 to 5 years. Keep in mind that the age ranges are only intended to be a guideline; your child may do some things sooner or later than the age range in which an activity or standard is classified.

If you are concerned that your child is not developing the way you, or your doctor, thinks he should, you may want to get in touch with your local education agency. Start by calling your local school, and they can refer you to the appropriate agency for more help.

***We hope that you find this guidebook useful in Helping Your Child Grow!***

# Tennessee Early Learning Standards

# Areas of Child Development

**STANDARDS SECTION 1:**  
**Speech and Language Development**

- Receptive Language
- Expressive Language
- Speech

**STANDARDS SECTION 2:**  
**Early Literacy**

- Book and Print Knowledge
- Early Writing
- Verbal and Listening Skills

**STANDARDS SECTION 3:**  
**Math and Science**

- Numbers, Spatial Sense, and Problem Solving
- Sensory Awareness, Time, Sequencing
- Life, Earth, and Physical Science

**STANDARDS SECTION 4:**  
**Social Studies**

- History, Geography
- Economics
- Human Interactions/Culture

**STANDARDS SECTION 5:**  
**Creative Arts**

- Music
- Art
- Movement and Dramatic Play

**STANDARDS SECTION 6:**  
**Social-Emotional Development**

- Self-Concept
- Self-Control
- Cooperation

**STANDARDS SECTION 7:**  
**Physical Development**

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Health/Health Practices

**Speech and Language Development**



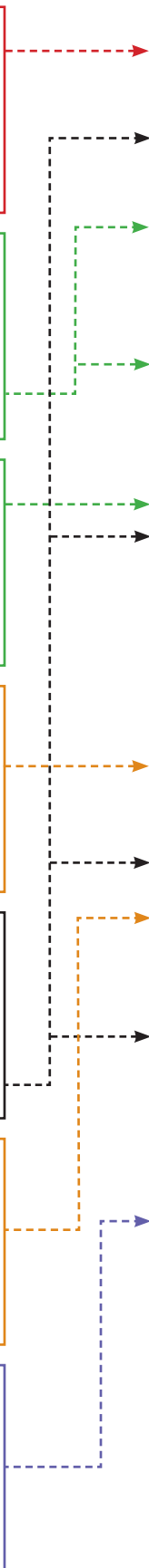
**Cognitive Development**



**Social-Emotional Development**



**Physical Development**



# Language and Literacy Development – Early Literacy, Speech, and Language

## **YOUNG PRESCHOOLERS** (age 3 to 4 years old)

For young preschoolers, the language and literacy development standards expect the following skills to be developing:

**What can you do at home to help your young preschooler develop these skills?**



Young preschoolers listen to conversations and longer stories, and can answer questions about what is said.

➔ Have conversations with your young preschooler; make a game out of it by using empty paper towel rolls as walkie-talkies to talk back and forth.



Young preschoolers like to make up their own stories and use pretend words.

➔ Make up stories with your young preschooler; take turns adding to the story by saying, “what happened next?”



Young preschoolers can say some words correctly, but still may have trouble pronouncing some sounds. The easy sounds will come first and the difficult sounds will follow.

➔ Don't call attention to your young preschooler for saying certain sounds incorrectly; instead, model the correct pronunciation when talking to your child so he or she can hear how the word sounds.



Young preschoolers begin to notice print in the environment, especially their own names.

➔ Point out words in the environment to your child, like billboards during a car ride, and write her name on her belongings so she will learn to recognize it.

Young preschoolers begin to *scribble write* their names, using wavy lines or letter-like forms at first.

➔ Let your young preschooler “write” his or her name in cards to family and friends or on artwork. Praise all attempts at “writing,” perfection will come with practice.

Young preschoolers pretend to be different characters during dramatic play.

➔ Act out stories you read with your young preschooler by pretending to be characters in the book.

Language Development means that your child is learning to communicate with others. Language is critical across all learning areas, and is necessary for later reading skills, which will also be needed for math, science, and across all areas of learning.

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**OLDER PRESCHOOLERS**  
*(age 4 to 5 years old)*

**For older preschoolers, the language and literacy development standards expect the following skills to be developing:**

**What can you do at home to help your older preschooler develop these skills?**



Older preschoolers understand more position words like “beneath” and “below,” and can follow more complex directions.

➔ Use more complex position words with your older preschooler: “can you take off your shoes and put them under your bed?”



Older preschoolers use more complex sentences and can talk about events that have already happened.

➔ Encourage your older preschooler to tell you about what happened at preschool earlier in the day. Ask questions like, “what was your favorite game at preschool today?”



Older preschoolers often learn to say new words easily, even if they have multiple syllables, especially if they are words they hear often, like “dinosaur” or “Dora the Explorer.”

➔ Point out new words in the picture books you read with your older preschooler, and encourage your child to try to say them.



Older preschoolers start to recognize when two words begin with the same sound, especially the same sound as their names.

➔ Talk about words that rhyme and words that start with the same sounds as your child’s name. Sing songs that play with sounds, like “Old MacDonald” or “The Wheels on the Bus.”

Older preschoolers “write” messages during play, like making a “don’t knock it down” sign to put on a block structure.

➔ Let your older preschooler help “write” messages around the house, like items to be put on the grocery list.

Older preschoolers participate with others during dramatic play and are involved with setting up events and giving out roles.

➔ Encourage your child to play pretend games. Children can decide who plays which roles. Don’t worry if your child is not always the “star,” but encourage sharing and taking turns.

# Cognitive Development –

## Math and Science

### YOUNG PRESCHOOLERS (age 3 to 4 years old)

For young preschoolers, the cognitive development standards suggest that the following skills will be developing:

What can you do at home to help your young preschooler develop these skills?



Young preschoolers begin to count objects using one number for each item.

➔ Let your young preschooler help set the dinner table, putting one plate out for each family member, then one cup, etc. Count to make sure there is enough for everyone.



Young preschoolers start noticing properties of objects (long, short, red, blue, fuzzy) and begin to sort and describe them.

➔ Talk to your young preschooler during daily routines and use descriptive words: the tall tree, the shaggy dog, etc.



Young preschoolers are interested in learning about their bodies and other living things in their environment, like pets and plants.

➔ Let your young preschooler help with chores in the house, like filling up the water bowl for the dog or watering plants. Explain why: “I have to water the plant and keep it in the sun so that it will keep growing.”



Young preschoolers begin to understand the order of events in their day.

➔ Try to follow a daily routine with young preschoolers, and remind them what is coming next: “After you finish your dinner, it will be time to take a bath.”

Young preschoolers enjoy taking items apart and attempting to put them back together again.

➔ Provide puzzles, Lego blocks, and stacking toys that your child can take apart and put back together.

Cognitive development is a child's growing ability to understand his or her environment. As your child grows and develops, he or she will learn many new things and begin to solve problems in his or her daily life.

**OLDER PRESCHOOLERS**  
(age 4 to 5 years old)

**For older preschoolers, the cognitive development standards suggest that the following skills will be developing:**

**What can you do at home to help your older preschooler develop these skills?**



Older preschoolers start to count to higher numbers and can answer "how many" when shown a small group of objects.

➔ Ask your older preschooler counting questions, like "How many carrots are on your plate?" or "How many steps do you have to take to get from the car to the preschool door?"



Older preschoolers can group objects that go together, like cups and plates.

➔ Let your older preschooler help with the laundry by matching socks that go together and sorting clothes for each family member.



Older preschoolers start to measure objects using items like a piece of string or their feet.

➔ Use questions with your older preschooler to solve problems: "Whose hand is bigger?" or "Who is shorter?"

Older preschoolers understand some directional words (up, down, in front, behind) and shape words (circle, triangle).

➔ Have a "treasure hunt" and give your older preschooler directions to find the treasure using directional words like inside, behind, under, etc.



Older preschoolers begin to understand that we use our senses to learn about the environment, like observing animals or hearing the sound the wind makes with wind chimes.

➔ Fill plastic bottles with sand, rice, marbles, feathers, and other objects and compare the sounds you hear when you shake the bottles.

Older preschoolers use art materials to create something instead of just playing with the materials.

➔ Work with your child to create more detailed art projects over time, like collages, paintings, or clay pottery.

# Social-Emotional Development –

## Self-Concept, Self-Control, Cooperation, and Human Interactions

### YOUNG PRESCHOOLERS (age 3 to 4 years old)

**For young preschoolers, these social-emotional skills will be developing:**

**What can you do at home to help your young preschooler develop these skills?**



Young preschoolers often act out common household activities such as washing dishes or driving a car.

➔ Talk about how each member of the family has an important job, and read books about different types of families and jobs.



Young preschoolers learn to wait for a short period of time for a turn with a toy another child is using.

➔ Try using a timer or a “two minutes left” warning to help children transition between activities.



Young preschoolers are developing a sense of humor and can laugh at themselves when little accidents happen, like dropping a toy or spilling their milk.

➔ When your young preschooler spills something, have him or her help clean it up without calling too much attention to the spill. Try not to overreact when you spill, too.



Young preschoolers can sometimes understand how others are feeling, like explaining why another child is feeling upset or angry.

➔ Talk about feelings with your young preschooler using “I messages;” “I feel upset when you yell at me.”



Young preschoolers begin to add detail to their artwork. Details might include attention to descriptions about items, objects, and people.

➔ Encourage your child to add detail to drawings, such as “how many windows does your house need, and how do you enter the house — what else do you need to draw?”

Social-Emotional Development includes a child's ability to understand himself, to regulate his own emotions, and to form relationships with others.

**OLDER PRESCHOOLERS**  
(age 4 to 5 years old)

**For older preschoolers, these social-emotional skills will be developing:**

**What can you do at home to help your older preschooler develop these skills?**



Older preschoolers can help make and follow family or classroom rules, and can give a simple reason why a rule exists.

➔ Create a few family rules (no more than 3-5) and talk about them with your older preschooler.



Older preschoolers begin to make drawings of home, school, or other familiar places where they spend a lot of time.

➔ Encourage your older preschooler to draw a "map" of the house, and help him or her label items in the drawing.

Older preschoolers start to understand what *community helpers* (police officers, firefighters) do to help people.

➔ Take your older preschooler on daily errands and talk about the jobs and activities of the people you see.

Older preschoolers are able to follow routines more independently, like knowing where to put toys during cleanup time.

➔ Let your older preschooler participate more in daily routines, like helping to pack a lunch or washing the dishes.



Older preschoolers show more patience in sticking with a task and asking an adult for help if they need it.

➔ Give your older preschooler time to try to complete a task on his or her own, like zipping a coat, but be available for help, too. Say, "let me know if you would like some help with that."



Older preschoolers are more willing to sing alone, or in a group. They also become interested in musical activities like singing, finger plays, and performances.

➔ Sing with your child, and make up finger plays and dances together. Take your older preschooler to a local play or concert, perhaps at a school or library.

# Physical Development –

## Physical Development and Health

### YOUNG PRESCHOOLERS (age 3 to 4 years old)

For young preschoolers, the physical development standards suggest that the following skills will be developing:

What can you do at home to help your young preschooler develop these skills?



Young preschoolers develop enough coordination of arms and legs to be able to use a swing without needing to be pushed.

➔ Spend lots of time outdoors with your younger preschooler so that your child has a chance to get needed physical activity like running, jumping, hopping, and skipping.



Young preschoolers begin to experiment with children's scissors, puzzles, blocks, and clay.

➔ Provide child-safe scissors and thick paper for your young preschoolers to practice cutting. This helps them to develop muscles in fingers that are needed for writing.



Young preschoolers can more easily grasp writing tools and paint brushes.

➔ Encourage your young preschooler to spend time drawing, painting, and attempting to write.



Young preschoolers are often able to use the toilet independently.

➔ If your young preschooler uses the toilet independently, teach her how to wipe correctly and wash her hands afterwards.



Young preschoolers can follow safety rules with reminders.

➔ Make sure to go over safety rules with your young preschooler, but never assume that he or she will remember all the rules without reminders and assistance.

Young preschoolers use body movement to show what they feel while listening to music.

➔ Play different types of music for your child and encourage him to move the way the music makes him feel.

Physical development includes the development of basic movement skills, both gross motor activities that use the large muscles (walking, running, jumping) and fine motor activities that exercise smaller muscles (picking up small items, pouring, cutting). Physical development also includes connecting physical activity to healthy growth.

**OLDER PRESCHOOLERS**  
(age 4 to 5 years old)

**For older preschoolers, the physical development standards expect the following skills to be developing:**

**What can you do at home to help your older preschooler develop these skills?**



Older preschoolers can run with more control and balance, and are able to stop and to change direction quickly.

➔ Provide lots of opportunities for your older preschooler to be able to run, hop, skip, and jump.



Older preschoolers are learning to hold a pencil or crayon correctly.

➔ Model for your older preschooler how you hold a pencil to write, but don't focus on his or her grip. The important thing is that your child is writing, not how he or she holds the pencil.



Older preschoolers can cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing and wash hands at appropriate times.

➔ Praise your older preschooler when he remembers to cover a cough and wash hands, and patiently remind your child if he or she forgets.



Older preschoolers actively participate in physical games and exercise.

➔ Talk with your older preschooler about the importance of being active to keep our bodies healthy, and make sure your child sees you exercise, too.

Older preschoolers are better able to move to the beat and pattern of different types of music.

➔ Play musical games with your older preschooler in which a different movement is used for different beats of music.

# Books and Websites

For more information about these areas, see the following resources:

## Websites for parents

Tennessee Early Learning Standards:

<http://www.state.tn.us/education/ci/earlychildhood/index.shtml>

Tennessee State Improvement Grant Website – information about preschool reading, writing, and language, as well as school-aged learning. <http://sig.cls.utk.edu>

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center – go to the parent section for tips, information, games, and activities. <http://www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – includes resources to support families. <http://www.naeyc.org/families>

Online Encyclopedia of Early Childhood Development – offers information about 38 topics related to the psychosocial development of the child, from conception to the age of five, and presents the most up-to-date scientific knowledge. <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com>. Also offers a Spanish version at <http://www.encyclopedia-infantes.com/es-mx/inicio.html>

Parents as Teachers – Parents are children’s first teachers, and this site offers parenting tips and information. <http://www.parentsasteachers.org>

Smart from the Start – a website from the Tennessee Department of Education about children from birth to five. <http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/index.htm>

Zero to Three – your child’s development from birth to three. <http://www.zerotothree.org>

Ten Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network (CCR&R) offices across Tennessee provide free training and technical assistance to child care providers and helps parents seeking child care to find child care providers in their area. <http://www.tnccrr.org>

Tennessee’s 29 Head Start programs serve nearly 20,000 children and their families every year with comprehensive educational, social and health programs for children, plus programs for family and community development. <http://www.tnheadstart.org>

## Books for parents

Anderson, B. and Kathy Cruz. *Bright Futures Family Pocket Guide: Raising Healthy Infants, Children, and Adolescents*. Family Voices, 2000.

This pocket guide, based on *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents* (2nd ed.), is a reference for families that highlights important child health topics, such as identification of milestones in the development of a child’s communication and cognitive skills.

Bickart, Toni and Diane Trister Dodge. *Reading Right From the Start: What Parents Can Do in the First Five Years*. Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2000.

Using everyday activities that parents share with their preschool children, the authors illustrate vocabulary, conversation, and literacy-building techniques. They stress the importance of talking, singing, and reading to children daily. The book includes reading lists for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. A Spanish version is available.

Bradford-Vernon, Jennifer R. *How to Be Your Child’s First Teacher: Insights for Parent Involvement*. McGraw-Hill Children’s Publishing, 2000.

Parents know their child’s special interests, strengths, and talents. The author suggests using this knowledge to enhance a child’s earliest learning opportunities and increase their readiness for success in the primary-age classroom. The chapters cover language arts, math, science, social studies, creative arts, and physical/health education, and offer many activity ideas.

Brazelton, T. Berry and Stanley I. Greenspan. *The Irreducible Needs of Children: What Every Child Must Have to Grow, Learn, and Flourish*. Perseus Publishing, 2000.

The authors define what every child needs in the first years of life. The seven irreducible needs of children are: ongoing nurturing relationships; physical protection, safety, and regulation; experiences tailored to individual differences; developmentally appropriate experiences; limit setting, structure, and expectations; stable, supportive communities and cultural continuity; and global thinking to address the irreducible needs of children throughout the world.



