

# Helping Your Child Grow

*A Parent Guide for Children  
Birth to Three Years*

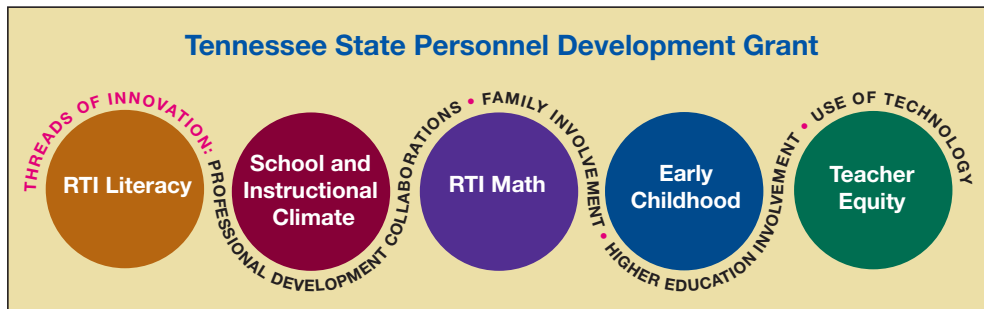




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Complete copies of the Tennessee Early Learning Standards are available at:  
<http://www.state.tn.us/education/ci/earlychildhood/index.shtml>

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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:

- **Infants/babies** – birth to one year old
- **Toddlers** – one year old to three 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 birth to three 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 Tennessee Early Intervention Services. Their main telephone number in Nashville is 1-800-852-7157. You can also look them up on their website, where you can find information about who to contact locally for more information. Their website is <http://www.state.tn.us/education/teis>.

***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**



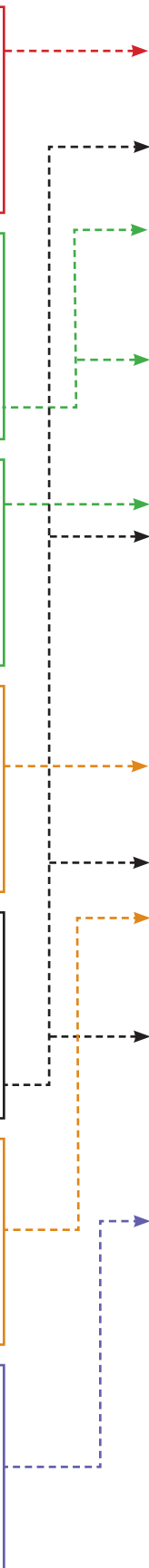
**Cognitive Development**



**Social-Emotional Development**



**Physical Development**



# Language and Literacy Development –

## Early Literacy, Speech, and Language

### INFANTS AND BABIES (birth to 12 months)

For infants and babies, the language and literacy development standards expect the following skills to be developing:

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



Infants begin to recognize the voices of familiar people and respond to them by quieting, smiling, or calmly gazing at them.

➔ Talk to your baby in a soothing, pleasant voice, and have other family members do the same. Use normal speech, not “baby talk.” Use words.



Infants use their own sounds to tell you when they are hungry, tired, or need attention, starting with crying and moving on to cooing, babbling, and laughing.

➔ Respond when your baby cries by trying to figure out what he or she needs — a new diaper, food, a change of position, or just to be held or touched. Respond to his cooing and babbling sounds and encourage them.



Infants start to be able to grasp objects in their fists and wave or mouth them.

➔ Give your baby toys that can be grasped, so that he or she can learn to hold objects and eventually hold a crayon to scribble.



Infants learn to recognize their own names and respond to simple phrases, like “wave bye-bye.”

➔ Use your baby’s name a lot when talking to him or her, and play games with hand gestures like “peek-a-boo” and “this little piggy.”

Infants start to use their senses to explore books, first by gazing and later by mouthing, waving, and throwing them.

➔ Read to your baby and provide books for him or her to explore, making sure to use board books and cloth books that are safe to be mouthed.

Infants prefer pleasant, soothing, familiar sounds and will smile, kick, and wiggle in response to them.

➔ Play soothing music for your baby; talk in pleasant tones and avoid harsh noises in the environment if possible.

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.

**TODDLERS**  
*(1 to 3 years)*

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

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



Toddlers are able to understand many more words than they can actually say.

➔ Point out objects around the house and name them for your toddler, even if he or she is not talking yet. Help your child connect words with objects.



Toddlers start to say words that they hear frequently and eventually can use two-word sentences like “go bye-bye.”

➔ Encourage your toddler’s attempts to communicate. If he says, “Bye-bye?” you might respond, “Do you want to go bye-bye in the car?” Teach him some simple signs to communicate and be sure he understands the words.



Toddlers learn to understand simple requests during routine activities, like “pick up the ball and put it in the box.”

➔ Involve your toddler in routines, using simple words to guide your toddler to help: “put the blue car in the toy box,” and talk about what happens next.



Toddlers show an interest in favorite books and request that you read them over and over again.

➔ Read books with your toddler every day. Read favorite stories over and over, and try some new books. You don’t have to finish the whole book, and you may just talk about the pictures; just make it fun!

Toddlers start to hold crayons and markers in their fists and make scribble marks.

➔ Provide crayons and paper for your toddler to make scribbles.

Toddlers experiment with play dough and clay by squeezing to explore texture.

➔ Let your toddler explore play dough and clay, and paint with water. This will help him to develop the fine motor skills needed for writing.

# Cognitive Development –

## Math and Science

### INFANTS AND BABIES (birth to 12 months)

**For infants and babies, the cognitive development standards expect the following skills to be developing:**

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



Infants use their sense of sight to explore their environment and they like to gaze at faces of caregivers and familiar objects.

➔ Spend time holding your baby and gazing into his or her eyes, talking softly in a pleasant tone.



Infants use their bodies to make things happen, like waving arms or legs to move a mobile or dropping a cup from their hands.

➔ Help your baby see the connection between his actions and what is happening. Keep your patience and sense of humor when dropping toys becomes a game.



Infants learn to recognize familiar people and may look for you if you leave the room.

➔ Tell your baby goodbye when you are dropping her off at child care or with a babysitter. Let her know you will be back.



Infants start using all their senses to explore their surroundings and learn where favorite toys are kept.

➔ Provide age-appropriate toys, such as teething rings and toys, cloth books, and soft blocks for your baby to mouth, wave, and explore.

Infants begin to understand the use of familiar toys like shape sorters and stacking blocks.

➔ Be patient when your baby wants to play the same game over and over, like building a block tower and knocking them down; this is how he or she learns how the world works.

Infants start to explore how different objects feel, like the texture of carpet or stuffed animal, or the silky edge of their favorite blanket.

➔ Help your baby feel different textures at home and connect the words with the sensations; smooth, soft, rough, scratchy.

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.

**TODDLERS**  
(1 to 3 years)

**For toddlers, the cognitive development standards expect the following skills to be developing:**

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



Toddlers start to use number words in songs, but they don't yet understand what numbers mean.

➔ Sing counting songs with your toddler, and encourage your child to ask for more during snack, either with words or a hand signal.



Toddlers begin to follow familiar routines in play, like putting a baby doll to sleep.

➔ Provide toys children can use to demonstrate understanding of their world; cooking, grocery shopping, taking care of babies.



Toddlers start to explore simple shape puzzles and nesting cups, and can understand some "size" words, like big and little.

➔ Provide simple puzzles and nesting cups for your toddler to explore. Offer help if your child gets stuck. Use *size* words with your toddler, and point out things that are *big* and *little*.



Toddlers are curious about the world and begin to ask lots of "why" questions about their environment.

➔ Be patient when your toddler asks lots of "why" questions, and try to answer as many as possible.

Toddlers enjoy spending time outside observing nature. They enjoy using all of their senses: tasting, seeing, hearing, touching, and smelling.

➔ Spend time with your toddler outside by going for a walk, collecting leaves, listening to the wind, and smelling the flowers.

Toddlers pretend to be animals by imitating their motions and sounds: flying like a bird, roaring like a lion.

➔ Use animal motions during routines: "Let's fly like a bird to the bathroom for bath time."

# Social-Emotional Development –

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

### INFANTS AND BABIES (birth to 12 months)

For infants and babies, the social-emotional development standards suggest that the following skills will be developing:

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



Infants start to recognize familiar caregivers and interact with them more frequently than strangers.

➔ Spend time holding your baby throughout the day, and make sure that regular caregivers and family members also have frequent interaction with him or her. Play games using a mirror to look at faces.



Infants begin to prefer caregivers and family members that they spend more time with, and react negatively to strangers.

➔ If you use a new babysitter, be aware that your baby may need some time to warm up to the new caregiver, so plan to give them time to get used to each other before leaving.



Infants notice other children around them, and will sometimes start to cry if another child is crying.

➔ Comfort your baby if he or she cries when hearing another child cry.



Infants use specific cries for different needs (hungry, need to be changed), and will often calm when a caregiver meets that need.

➔ Pay attention to the different cries your baby uses, so that you can meet each specific need.



Infants start to find ways to calm themselves during stress, such as sucking on fingers or rubbing a soft toy.

➔ Provide soothing items for your baby, like a soft toy or pacifier; just don't leave soft items in the crib when your baby is sleeping.

Infants begin to respond to people and objects.

➔ Respond to your baby's coos, babbling, cries, and smiles, and encourage your children to talk to your baby too.

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

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## **TODDLERS**

*(1 to 3 years)*

**For toddlers, the social-emotional development standards suggest that the following skills will be developing:**

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

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Toddlers will look for a familiar adult during play, especially when trying a new activity.

➔ Smile and reassure your toddler when he or she checks in with you during play.

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Toddlers want to do things for themselves, and are often frustrated when caregivers try to help.

➔ Let your toddler help with some routines and self-care activities, but set him or her up to succeed. For example, provide a stool so your child can reach the sink to help brush his or her teeth.

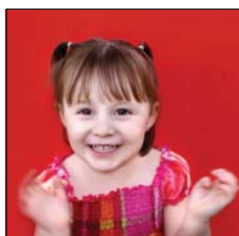
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Toddlers start to play beside other children with similar items, but they do not play together.

➔ Encourage your toddler to play beside other children, but don't try to force toddlers to share toys.

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Toddlers have strong preferences for certain items and activities, and will use "no" often.

➔ If your toddler refuses to do something (get dressed), offer limited choices: "do you choose the red shirt or the blue shirt?"

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Toddlers start to participate in self-care routines, such as dressing themselves, feeding themselves, and learning to use the toilet.

➔ Encourage your child's independence as the child is able, but offer assistance if he is becoming frustrated.

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Toddlers try to imitate the motions of familiar songs and finger plays, and are beginning to understand emotions.

➔ Label your child's emotions: happy, sad, frustrated. Sing and sign songs with hand motions and finger plays, like "When You're Happy and You Know It."

# Physical Development –

## Physical Development and Health

### INFANTS AND BABIES (birth to 12 months)

For infants and babies, the physical development standards suggest that the following skills will be developing:

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



Infants gain control of the head and body over time, starting with raising the head and eventually walking.

➔ Have *tummy time* where your baby spends play time on his or her tummy; this helps your child eventually hold his or her head up. Always put your baby on his or her back to sleep.



Infants bat at dangling objects with hands and feet, and eventually use their hands to grasp objects.

➔ Provide soft toys that your baby can grasp onto easily.



Infants have skin that is sensitive to the sun and perfumed soaps, and they may react to exposure by getting skin rashes.

➔ Always cover your baby's skin and put a hat on your child when spending time outdoors; use unscented bathing products and detergents.



Infants put objects in their mouths to learn about the item's physical properties.

➔ Keep small items and toxic materials locked up and out of your baby's reach, while providing lots of safe materials for your child to mouth.



Infants eventually use the thumb-and-finger grasp to pick up items, like finger foods.

➔ Provide *finger foods* when your baby is ready to eat them, so that he or she can practice the thumb-and-finger grasp.

Infants begin to bounce or move with some rhythm when they hear music.

➔ Play lively children's music for your baby to hear while holding him, and imitate his movements.

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.

**TODDLERS**  
(1 to 3 years)

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

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



Toddlers move from crawling to walking to explore their environment.

➔ Make sure your house is safe for a walking toddler, free of items that might cause your child to fall.



Toddlers begin to use utensils like spoons and forks and hold their own cup when drinking.

➔ Provide utensils for your toddler to participate in feeding him or herself.



Toddlers start to climb up a few steps.

➔ Hold your toddler's hand when he or she attempts to walk up a few steps, and make sure stairs are still blocked with a baby gate.

Toddlers can help with dressing and undressing, as well as simple household chores.

➔ Let your toddler help zip up pants and assist with putting laundry in the basket, and provide simple puzzles and stacking blocks.

Toddlers can catch a large ball by trapping it against the chest, and can throw a ball with some help.

➔ Provide a soft, large ball for your toddler to explore throwing and catching, and spend time walking outdoors.



Toddlers can grasp a crayon or fat pencil and make scribbles on paper.

➔ Provide crayons and paper for your child to scribble; you may need to tape the paper down to hold it in place.

# 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.



