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Early Learning Parents' Pages

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING

Understanding Your Child's Developmental Milestones

During the first five years of your child's life, the optimal foundation for development and learning begins at home. As a parent, understanding typical growth and development for your child is essential. The Division of Early Learning encourages families to use the [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#) (FELDS) as a guide to follow and understand the developmental milestones your child should reach during each age range and in each of these eight developmental domains:

1. **Physical Development** – Development of body proportion, coordination, strength and the brain occur primarily during your child's early years. Your child develops physical, motor and sensory capacities that enhance their exploration and mastery of their environment.
2. **Approaches to Learning** – Your child's attitudes and how they engage in new environments, interactions, discoveries and their perception about learning influence how they learn.
3. **Social Development** – Your child's ability to establish connection and relationships with peers influences how they respond to others.
4. **Language and Literacy** – Your child communicates by listening, speaking and eventually writing. Your child develops language and literacy skills through educational resources and opportunities at school and home as well as in daily interactions speaking with people.
5. **Mathematical Thinking** – Foundational math begins with number knowledge, number sense, size and shape awareness and the relationship between objects and space. Understanding of math concepts begins in the first months of life and continues to grow and expand as your child interacts with others and their environment.
6. **Scientific Inquiry** – Discovery and exploration are demonstrated when children use their senses and reflexes to observe and collect information from their surroundings.
7. **Social Studies concepts** – Your child uses these concepts when they explore their world and begin making sense of their environment. Your child begins to respond to people and objects, recognize the difference between wants and needs, respond to schedules and explore characteristics of self, such as eyes, nose and mouth.
8. **Creative Expression Through the Arts** – Your child has the ability to express feelings and opinions, use words and solve problems.

The [Families section](#) of the FELDS provides the appropriate skills by age for each developmental domain. Observe your child playing at home and note the age-appropriate milestones you see them achieve. Initiate conversation about their day and ask what they have learned.

Discuss concerns with your child's pediatrician and teacher if you feel your child is not meeting a developmental milestone or if you feel they need extra support. Developmental screenings help identify any delays in your child's development and can assist with getting the needed services to support your child's learning.

If you are not sure where developmental screenings are offered, contact your [local early learning coalition](#) to learn more. You may also contact [Help Me Grow Florida](#) to learn about the importance of participation in the screening process and successful outcomes of early detection. Help Me Grow Florida has several developmentally appropriate activities to help you engage and have fun while supporting your child's learning.



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April is Child Abuse Prevention Month



Have you noticed blue pinwheels spinning in the wind in your community? The planting of these pinwheels marks the start of Child Abuse Prevention Month and serves as a reminder of the importance of working together as families and communities to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The pinwheels are part of the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign, held during Child Abuse Prevention Month, and is coordinated in Florida by [Prevent Child Abuse Florida](#), the [Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida](#) and the [Florida Department of Children and Families](#).

You can show your support by displaying pinwheels in your community. This simple gesture can help bring attention to the issue of child abuse and demonstrate your support for children and families in your area.

If you suspect or know of a child being abused or neglected, report it to the [Florida Abuse Hotline](#) at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

Seek Help for Developmental Delays

As a parent, keeping a close eye on your child's interactions during their early years is important in monitoring your child's development and detecting potential signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This complex condition affects children differently, and early detection and early intervention can be transformative to overall growth and development.

The article on page 1, *Understanding Your Child's Developmental Milestones*, describes how the [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#) provide insight into your child's learning and development that might help you detect signs of developmental delay or ASD.

If you feel that your child is not reaching developmental milestones, inform their pediatrician. In addition, contact [Early Steps](#) and inquire about intervention services provided to eligible infants and toddlers up to age 36 months. You may also contact the [Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System \(FDLRS\)](#) for diagnostic screening, placement coordination and training offered to families. The Division of Early Learning's Warm Line services also provide consultation and support. To locate a Warm Line Specialist, contact your [local early learning coalition](#).

Early intervention is key to ensuring your child has the best possible developmental outcomes.

Upcoming for May

- May 10, 2024, is Provider Appreciation Day. Celebrate your child's early learning teacher or provider on this special day.
- VPK graduation is almost here! Stay tuned for ways to celebrate your child's accomplishments and transition to kindergarten.
- The [Summer BreakSpot Program](#) or [Summer Food Service Program](#) is a federal nutrition program that local nonprofits and schools use to ensure kids in their communities get nutritious meals during the summer.