



# Child Development Reference Guide

(for All)



# Child Development Reference Guide: 0-7 years

## INFANCY (Birth – 12 months)

## TODDLER (1-3 years)

## YOUNGER CHILDREN (4-7 years)

### Developmental Considerations

- Developing trust
- Stranger awareness (6-8 months) Stranger Anxiety (8-10 months) and may continue through preschool age)
- Object permanence- objects and people continue to exist even when they are no longer visible
- Development of gross/fine motor skills

### Developmental Considerations

- Egocentric- hard to see any point of view other than their own
- Ability to imitate routine tasks (by 14 months)
- Utilizes play to learn and understand tasks and experiences
- Increasing independence and autonomy
- Social development: engages with others purposely

### Developmental Considerations

- Egocentric- difficulty seeing any point of view other than their own
- Concrete and symbolic thinking, learning to use words and pictures to represent objects
- Magical thinking (blurred boundaries between fantasy and reality, may believe they “wished” or willed something into happening
- Developing mastery over movement and play
- Learn through pretend play but struggle with logic and viewpoint of others

### Potential Stressors

- Separation from caregivers
- Unfamiliar environment
- Disruption of routine
- Stranger anxiety

### Potential Stressors

- Separation anxiety
- Reduced autonomy
- Disruption of routine
- Lack of opportunities for self-control

### Potential Stressors

- Separation from parents/caregivers
- Guilt, misunderstanding, and believing that they caused or are responsible for events
- Fear of both real and imagined threats
- Disruption of routine

### What YOU Can Do

- Presence (as much as possible) of familiar adult/caregiver
- Use calming voice when talking
- Sing (ABC’s, twinkle twinkle, wheels on the bus, row your boat)
- Comfort/familiar objects
- Rocking/Holding
- Play peek-a-boo

### What YOU Can Do

- Encourage parent involvement
- Sing songs (ABCs, twinkle twinkle, wheels on the bus, row your boat)
- Play head, shoulders, knees and toes
- I Spy objects in area (trees, cars, dogs etc for distraction)
- Provide simple choices & opportunities for free play

### What YOU Can Do

- Clear, simple explanations of event
- Presence (as much as possible) of familiar adult/caregiver
- Provide opportunities for child-led independent and group play
- Chalk/bubbles/use stick and sand/dirt to play tic tac toe
- I spy (around neighborhood/indoors)
- Hide object and play “hot or cold” to find object
- Play tag/Duck Duck Goose or Red light Green Light (in controlled area)
- Make up a story with topics chosen by the children, have each child add to the story



# Child Development Reference Guide: 8-18 years

## OLDER CHILDREN (8-12 years)

## TEENS (13- 18 years)

### Developmental Considerations

- Likes to feel mastery over a task
- Begins to think logically about concrete events
- Better understanding of their bodies
- Socialization with peers becomes more important
- Starts comparing themselves to others
- Can take on more complex tasks (Household or other)

### Developmental Considerations

- Begins to think abstractly and reason about hypothetical problems
- Wants to be included in decision making
- Personal identity and sense of self developing
- Better understands their bodies and the effects of healthy living
- Socialization and peer acceptance is most important

### Potential Stressors

- Lack of information/explanations causes anxiety
- Unexpected separation from family or primary caregivers
- Separation from normal activities, home, school, peers
- Reduced self-esteem
- Fear of feeling different from peers (social stigma)

### Potential Stressors

- Lack of information/explanations causes anxiety
- Limitations related to privacy, peer relationships, decision making
- Concern with perspective of others/body image
- Fear of feeling different from peers (social stigma)
- Unable to socialize with peers

### What YOU Can Do

- Promote opportunities for peer interaction, parental support & play led by children
- Provide space to talk about feelings (understand they may not feel like talking or sharing)
- Charades/ tic tac toe, games & art with objects from nature
- Outdoor games & big movement activities to expend energy
- Help make up stories/play verbal mad libs/fill in the blanks
- Write a song together
- Make up a dance/play freeze dance

### What YOU Can Do

- Clear explanations of what they can do (may benefit from helping roles)
- Provide opportunities for self-initiated activities & interactions
- Provide opportunities for free choice/self expression
- Provide encouragement
- Provide space to talk about feelings (understand they may not feel like talking or sharing)
- Validate their feelings
- Provide opportunities for peer interaction/group support



# Child Development Reference Guide: Neurodiverse Children

## Considerations

- Neurodiverse children often have a higher sensitivity and are at a greater risk for dysregulation with disruptions in routine and changes in stimuli
- Their specific neurodiversity may be invisible to others, at least initially
- Neurodiversity can be difficult to distinguish from trauma behaviors

## Potential Stressors

- When minimal preparation is given for transitions
- Loss of routine
- Loss of adaptive equipment (communication device, medications, sensory equipment, wheel chair, hearing aids, glasses, etc.)
- Heightened stimulation from new or chaotic environments and people

## What YOU Can Do

- Ensure the locations where children and families are staying have someone who is comfortable working with neurodiverse children present for each staff shift to support these families and act as a resource to other staff
- Use visual aids (pictures, photos, actual items, etc.) along with instructions
- Minimize environmental stimulation (options include: noise cancelling headphones, sleep mask, extra blankets for over the head, etc.)
- Identify a specific calming area where children can take breaks if needed to self-regulate (optional items to add to the calming area, and make available to children as they need them: weighted blankets/ weighted lap mats of various weights, oral chew items, variety of fidget sensory toys)