## Developmental Continuum from Birth to Age 3½:
### Social Emotional Indicators*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Attachment Trust/Security</th>
<th>Self-Awareness Identity/Self Esteem</th>
<th>Exploration Autonomy/Independence</th>
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</table>
| **INFANT** (birth to 15 mos) | • Newborns recognize human language and prefer their own mother's voice  
• Prefer human faces  
• Early social interaction is a smile and mutual gazing  
• Crawls away but checks back visually, calls, and gestures to ensure adult contact  
• Stretches arms to be taken  
• Prefers familiar adults  
• Acts anxious around strangers  
• Uses a blanket or stuffed toy for security and reassurance | • Goes from accidentally sucking own hands to carefully watching them  
• Tries to make things happen  
• Hits or kicks things to make a pleasing sight or sound continue  
• Talks to self when alone  
• Prefers to be held by familiar people  
• Imitates adult behaviors  
• Knows own name  
• Understands simple directions | • Brings thumb or hand to mouth  
• Tracks mother’s voice  
• Observes own hands  
• Babbles using all types of sounds  
• Uses a few words mixed with babbling to form sentences  
• Tries to keep a knee ride going by bouncing to get the adult started again  
• Shows strong feelings (anger, anxiety, affection) |
| **TODDLER** (12 mos- 2½ yrs) | • Relates to others by exploring things with them  
• Pulls up, stands holding furniture, then walks alone  
• Goes through a phase of clinging to primary caregiver  
• Experiences periods of intense feelings when separating or reuniting with a parent  
• Sees others as a barrier to immediate gratification | • Knows can make things happen but is not sure of responsibility for actions  
• Becomes bossy  
• Uses the words Me, You, and I  
• Says "No" to adults  
• Explores everything  
• Is sensitive to others' judging behavior | • Keeps looking for a toy that is hidden from view  
• Understands many more words than can say  
• Has wide mood swings (for example, from stubborn to cooperative)  
• Wants to do things by self |
| **PRESCHOOL** (2½-3½ yrs) | • Is capable of dramatic play  
• Has better control over all aspects of self  
• Needs adult coaching to get along well with others  
• Shows feelings with words and in symbolic play  
• Is more aware that others have feelings  
• Can plan ahead | • Is capable of self-evaluation (for example, good, bad, pretty, ugly)  
• Tries to control self (for example, emotions and toileting)  
• Is learning to take turns in conversations  
• Knows a lot about communicating in the style of own culture | • Uses names of self and others  
• Can tell others about what happened that day  
• Has much larger vocabulary to express ideas  
• Shows concern for others  
• Classifies, labels, and sorts objects and experiences into groups |

Adapted with permission from J. Ronald Lally, Abbey Griffin, et al., *Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Groups: Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE/The National Center, 1995), pp. 78-79.