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Developmental Profile: Younger Toddlers

The development of children is ever changing. Toddlers are constantly exploring and learning through their experiences. I am working with younger toddlers (18 months – 2 years) therefore for this reflection I will be discussing that age group. Physical, social/emotional, cognitive, and language development are four of the areas that the toddlers are developing. One of the main ways that this age develops is through play and exploration. The more children are engaged in environments that are safe, nurturing, and challenging, the more they are going to learn.

During physical development children are gaining body awareness and control. Toddlers are leaning to gather information through their senses. They gain knowledge of their bodies and learn how to control their bodies such as balance and control of their actions. As Toddlers large muscle development is growing as well they are developing their coordination skills. Toddlers are developing the ability to move in different ways using their whole bodies. Toddlers are also developing their small muscles as well as coordination. Toddlers are learning to use their eyes and hands together to complete tasks and solve problems. Toddlers are busy developing their fine motor skills such as holding a crayon with the whole hand, eventually holding the crayon with the thumb and all fingers with forearm turned so thumb is pointing down, puts on and takes off clothing, uses utensils, strings large beads, rolls and manipulates play dough. These are valuable fine motor skills that toddlers are busy developing. Gross motor skills are also being developed throughout toddlerhood. Toddlers are busy jumping with two feet, walking backwards, sideways, walking upstairs and downstairs alone (both feet on one step), running without falling, and uses riding toys (making move by pushing it with both feet at the same time.) Toddlers are also developing skills such as walking on a narrow balance beam, walking upstairs and downstairs (alternating feet), running (avoiding obstacles), and pedals a tricycle.

You know that toddlers are developing when they can demonstrate increasing body strength, flexibility and control. An example of this would be a child last month could not pick up the play vacuum because it was too difficult now she is gaining body strength can pick up the vacuum. They will show a range of mobility skills. Toddlers use their senses to explore people, places and things; such as touching the plants in the planetarium, as well as use their bodies to explore environments. Toddlers will increasingly recognize what their body needs; knowing when they need their diaper changed. Toddlers will respond to sensory clues as well as purposefully exploring and the use objects for equipments.

Social emotional development can be described as the sense of self and of others. Toddler’s environment directly effects their development. Throughout emotional development toddlers are experiencing self-concept (child’s sense of self), identity (children’s idea about their place in the world), social competence (children’s ability to navigate social situations) and emotional expression (children’s ability to express feelings and understand behaviors).

We know that toddlers are developing when they develop attachments to primary caregivers. For instance when they run over to their teacher to say hello, or when they are sad and they need a hug toddlers will display their attachment with their comfort of their teacher. When toddlers demonstrate awareness of self and of their own abilities they are progressing. Toddlers will also be able to acquire a sense of belonging. They will increasingly explore people, places and things. Toddlers will be able to recognize similarities and differences between people. Toddlers will show empathy by responding to social and emotional cues. Toddlers will be able to communicate a vast array of needs. Toddlers will be exploring emotions and their impact on self and others.

Language development is toddlers using their voices, eyes and facial expressions putting sounds together, then words and eventually sentences. Toddlers are developing their listening comprehension (receptive language) which is understanding what is being said. Toddlers are developing nonverbal communication skills such as the use of movements, sounds, facial expressions for purposeful communication and gestures. Verbal expression (expressive language) is also developing which are the use of words and the development of vocabulary for purposeful communication. Toddlers are using self centered pronouns such as I, me, you, and mine. Toddlers also use two word sentences. They are beginning to use words to describe things such as big, dirty, wet, hot and small. Emergent and early reading is when children’s awareness and recognition of sounds, symbols, and enjoyment of written materials is growing.

We know that toddlers are developing because they engage in face-to-face interactions with others, responding to non-verbal and verbal communication cues, repeat sounds purposefully and communicate needs and ideas through verbal and non-verbal expression. Toddlers eye contract increases with peers and adults as well as pointing to objects. We also know that toddlers are developing when they begin to put sounds together to form words, identify familiar people, places, objects, and actions in everyday life, photos, and books. Children depict development through their act of exploring books and listening to stories, as well as beginning to experiment with writing tools.

Cognitive development is enriched by exploration. Children are participating in purposeful investigations of their environment. They are using their knowledge to guide and deepen their experiences. Children are increasing their ability to draw on their knowledge of experiences to formulate questions and hypotheses that support the development of mathematical, scientific, linguistic and sociocultural concepts. Children’s emerging knowledge, understanding and ability to describe basic cause and effect are developing. Children’s critical thinking skills are also growing such as their ability to take experiences and make sense of them. Children are drawing on that information to formulate additional questions, actively constructing meaning and being able to make decisions. Children are also developing their ability to use descriptive words to talk about their activities and their understanding of the environment.

We know that children are developing their cognitive development when they recognize familiar people, places and things. Toddlers use their senses and body to investigate people, places and things. Toddlers observe and respond to different cause and effects as well as beginning to collect and organize materials for play. Toddlers are beginning to be able to combine and separate and concrete objects.

Early childhood is a crucial time for children they are constantly growing and developing. Toddler’s especially are very curious and adventurous they want to explore; that us how they learn. By planning and carefully setting up your environment/classroom you can provide a rich environment full of learning experiences for children.

**Bibliography**

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