

Organization and structure of the document

The *Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to 3* are divided into four **domains** that reflect the full range of child development.

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- Social and Emotional Development
 - Language Development and Communication
 - Cognitive Development
 - Physical and Motor Development
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Each domain of development is related to and influences the others. The domains are further divided into **components** that designate important areas of infant and toddler development within each domain. **Indicators** of progress for infants and toddlers in gaining competencies, knowledge, skills and behaviors are then specified within each component.

The development of the *Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to 3* was informed by the *Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress* for 3- to 5-year-olds, which were written in 2000 and revised in 2005. However, there are some significant differences between the two documents related to the special nature of development during the infant and toddler period. The *Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to 3* have four domains compared to six domains for the *Early Childhood Indicators of Progress* for the preschool period. The domain components, as well as the specific indicators, are also different to better reflect the emerging developments of the age period from birth to 3.

The identification of indicators for the *Minnesota Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to 3* was based on a review of child development research and early learning guidelines from other states (National Child Care Information Center, 2005). Nearly all states now have some form of early learning guidelines for ages 3 to 5, and about 17 states have completed early learning guidelines for ages birth to 3. Several others are in the process of developing early learning guidelines that focus on or include infants and toddlers (National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2006).

Like the *Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress* for 3- to 5-year-olds, the development, selection and wording of indicators for birth to 3 were informed by national research on early learning guidelines (Scott-Little, Kagan, & Frelow, 2003b, 2005; Neuman & Roskos, 2004) that identified criteria for selection of specific indicators:

1. **Research-based** – Indicators are informed by research as being reasonably achievable and age appropriate.
2. **Clearly written** – Indicators are clear and coherent as to what most infants and toddlers know and are able to do.
3. **Measurable** – Indicators reflect observable behaviors, concepts and skills.
4. **Comprehensive** – Indicators cover all domains of development and provide sufficient breadth and depth of each area of development.
5. **Manageable** – There are a reasonable number of indicators in each domain for users to understand.
6. **Applicable** – Indicators are broadly applicable to infants and toddlers from diverse linguistic, economic, and cultural backgrounds and to infants and toddlers with variations in developmental abilities and skills in a variety of settings.

Examples and strategies, which caregivers can use to facilitate infant and toddler development, are listed for each of the components within the domains. **Caregiver** in the examples and strategies refers to parents, close family members, child care providers, teachers and other primary adults in children’s lives. The examples and strategies are not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather provide further clarification of indicators and suggest some strategies, play and learning activities that will enhance infant and toddler development.

Overview and definitions

Term and definition	Example as used in booklet		
A Domain is a major area of development.	DOMAIN I: Social and Emotional Development		
A Component is a subpart of each of the domains.	COMPONENT: Trust and emotional security		
Indicators define expectations for a specific, observable outcome for the child.	INDICATORS of developing trust and emotional security	<p>Engages in behaviors that build relationships with familiar adults</p> <p>Shows preference for familiar adults</p> <p>Responds to unfamiliar adults cautiously</p> <p>Seeks to find comfort in new situations</p> <p>Shows emotional connection and attachment to others</p>	
Examples are used to guide parents, caregivers and teachers in the interpretation and application of the indicators. Examples are given for each of the three age groups.	EXAMPLES of behaviors that show development of trust and emotional security		
	<p>Young Infant (Birth to 8 months)</p> <p>Looks intently at familiar human faces</p> <p>Follows movement of caregiver about the room with eyes</p> <p>■</p>	<p>Older Infant (8 to 18 months)</p> <p>Greets family caregiver with a smile, hug or kiss</p> <p>Cries when left with a new caregiver, but may respond to soothing words, holding and other forms of comfort</p> <p>▲</p>	<p>Toddler (18 to 36 months)</p> <p>Says “Hi” or “Bye-bye,” smiles or waves when familiar people enter or leave the room</p> <p>Looks for or asks for “Mama” or familiar adult when they fall down or get hurt</p> <p>●</p>
Some Caregiver Strategies to facilitate infant and toddler development are given for the components and indicators for each of the three age groups.	SOME CAREGIVER STRATEGIES for promoting trust and emotional security		
	<p>Young Infant (Birth to 8 months)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respond to baby’s messages and cues and try to determine baby’s needs ■ Provide a limited number of consistent caregivers who baby relates to on a regular basis 	<p>Older Infant (8 to 18 months)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Greet baby, pick up baby, hold baby close and exchange hugs to provide comfort and reassurance ▲ Acknowledge baby’s feelings of anxiety and allow baby to use primary caregiver for security 	<p>Toddler (18 to 36 months)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk with toddler about where you are going and when you will return ● Give toddler a familiar toy, blanket or book to provide comfort and reassurance in your absence
Caregiver in the examples and strategies refers to parents, close family members, child care providers, teachers and other primary adults in the child’s life.			

Minnesota's Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to 3

DOMAIN I: Social and Emotional Development

COMPONENTS:	Trust and Emotional Security Self-Awareness Self-Regulation Relationships with Other Children
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DOMAIN II: Language Development and Communication

COMPONENTS:	Listening and Understanding Communicating and Speaking Emergent Literacy
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DOMAIN III: Cognitive Development

COMPONENTS:	Exploration and Discovery Memory Problem Solving Imitation and Symbolic Play
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DOMAIN IV: Physical and Motor Development

COMPONENTS:	Gross Motor Development Fine Motor Development Physical Health and Well-Being
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