



THE PARENT PRESS

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Programs for Parents, Inc. monthly newsletter features family focused articles and resources on parenting, health, policy, and community information



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MAJOR DOMAINS IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

There are four major developmental domains: physical, cognitive, language, and social-emotional. As children grow, they develop skills in all areas.

A child's development is a multi-faceted process comprised of growth, regression, and change in different domains. These domains include physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and language development.

Acquiring and mastering skills in certain domains may appear more prominent during specific stages of life. Yet kids virtually always experience some degree of change in all domains as they grow.

In this article we will learn more about developmental domains, what to expect in the major areas of development, and when to contact a health care provider.

WHAT ARE DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS?

When discussing human development, the word "domain" refers to specific aspects of growth and change. The major domains of development are physical ([fine motor](#) and [gross motor skills](#)), cognitive, language, and social-emotional. Children often experience a significant and obvious change in one domain at a time. For example, if a baby is focusing on [learning to walk](#), which is in the physical domain, you may not notice as much language development or new words until they have mastered walking.²

It might seem like a particular domain is the only one experiencing developmental change during different periods of a child's life. But change typically occurs in the other domains as well—just more gradually and less prominently.



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAIN

The physical domain covers the development of physical changes, which includes the following:³

- Growing in size and strength
- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- Development of the senses

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

When young children are learning how to perform different activities with their fingers in coordination with their eyes such as grasping, releasing, reaching, pinching, and turning their wrists. Because these small muscle movements take time to develop, they may not come easily at first.

These fine motor skills help kids perform tasks for daily living, like buttoning buttons, [picking up finger foods](#), using a fork, pouring milk, going to the restroom, and washing their hands.

From an early age, give kids opportunities to use their hands and fingers. Give your baby rattles, plush balls, and other toys to grasp.

Later, toys that allow them to pick things up and fit them into slots are good for developing beginning skills. As they get older, teach them how to button buttons, use scissors, hold a pencil, and do other tasks with their fingers and hands.

CHECK OUT THIS
FREE UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENT



THE
NEWARK
MUSEUM
OF
ART

COMMUNITY DAY MARTIN LUTHER
KING JR: STRONGER TOGETHER
MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 12-5PM

FREE. REGISTRATION REQUIRED

REGISTER NOW

<https://tinyurl.com/zu4avw42>

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

When young children are learning how to perform different activities with their fingers in coordination with their eyes such as grasping, releasing, reaching, pinching, and turning their wrists. Because these small muscle movements take time to develop, they may not come easily at first. These fine motor skills help kids perform tasks for daily living, like buttoning buttons, picking up finger foods, using a fork, pouring milk, going to the restroom, and washing their hands. From an early age, give kids opportunities to use their hands and fingers. Give your baby rattles, plush balls, and other toys to grasp. Later, toys that allow them to pick things up and fit them into slots are good for developing beginning skills. As they get older, teach them how to button buttons, use scissors, hold a pencil, and do other tasks with their fingers and hands.



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAIN

The cognitive domain includes intellectual development and creativity. As they develop cognitively, kids gain the ability to do the following:

- Process thoughts
- Pay attention
- Develop memories
- Understand their surroundings
- Express creativity
- Make, implement, and accomplish plans

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)



Ask Your Child Care Provider About the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Did you know your child care provider can receive support for serving nutritious meals? The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a Federally funded initiative that reimburses family child care (FCC) providers for offering healthy meals and snacks to children.

The program improves the quality of child care while supporting families by making care more affordable. Through CACFP, providers serve meals that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and proteins, promoting healthy growth and development.

Cynthia Green, our CACFP Coordinator, provides training and assistance to FCC providers in Essex County to help them implement this valuable program and ensure children receive healthy, balanced meals.

CONTACT

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CACFP Coordinator

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SUNDAY STUDIO MUSEUM ADMISSION REQUIRED; FREE FOR MAM MEMBERS

Join us at MAM for a fun family art-making activity inspired by the Museum's current exhibitions. Occurring every Sunday with sessions at 1 p.m., 2 p.m., and 3 p.m., Sunday Studio is led by MAM instructors and allows participants to create art in a fun and collaborative environment

PRE-REGISTRATION THROUGH THE MAM WEBSITE IS NOT REQUIRED, BUT ENCOURAGED.

<https://www.montclairartmuseum.org/>



The child psychologist Jean Piaget outlined four stages of cognitive development, known as the Piagetian Theory. These stages are outlined below.

Sensorimotor stage (birth to age 2)

The sensorimotor stage involves learning about the environment through movements and sensations. Infants and toddlers use basic actions like sucking, grasping, looking, and listening to learn about the world around them.

Preoperational stage (ages 2 to 7)

During the preoperational stage, children learn to think symbolically as well as use words or pictures to represent things. Kids in this stage enjoy pretend play, but still struggle with logic and understanding another person's perspective.

Concrete operational stage (ages 7 to 11)

Once they enter the concrete operational stage, kids start to think more logically, but may still struggle with hypothetical situations and abstract thinking. Because they are beginning to see things from another person's perspective, now is a good time to start teaching empathy.

Formal operational stage (age 12 and up)

During the formal operational stage, a child develops an increase in logical thinking. They also develop an ability to use deductive reasoning and understand abstract ideas. As they become more adept at problem-solving, they also are able to think more scientifically about the world around them.

Even older kids and teens need play. You can help your child develop and hone their cognitive skills by giving them opportunities to play with blocks, puzzles, and board games.

You also should create an environment where your child feels comfortable asking questions about the world around them and has plenty of opportunities for free play.

Develop your child's desire to learn by helping them explore topics they are passionate about. Encourage thinking and reasoning skills by asking them open-ended questions and teaching them to expand on their thought processes. As they get older, teach them how to be critical consumers of media and where to find answers to things they don't know.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAIN

The social-emotional domain includes a child's growing understanding and control of their emotions. They also begin to identify what others are feeling, develop the ability to cooperate, show empathy, and use moral reasoning.

Friendships

This domain includes developing attachments to others and learning how to interact with them. For instance, young children learn how to share, take turns, and accept differences in others. They also develop many different types of relationships, from parents and siblings to peers, teachers, coaches, and others in the community.

Tweens, especially, demonstrate significant developments in the social-emotional domain as their peers become more central to their lives and they learn how to carry out long-term friendships. Typically, parents will notice major increases in social skills during this time.

To help your child develop socially and emotionally, look for opportunities for them to interact with kids their age and form relationships with both children and adults. You can arrange playdates, explore playgroups, and look into extracurricular activities. Also, encourage them to talk to their grandparents, teachers, and coaches

Sense of self

To encourage a sense of self, ask your child about their interests and passions and encourage them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Teach them about recognizing and managing feelings. As they get older, talk to them about healthy friendships and how to handle peer pressure.

You also should not shy away from challenging talks like those covering sex and consent. All of these different social and emotional facets play into your child's overall development.

Language Developmental Domain

Language development is dependent on the other developmental domains. The ability to communicate with others grows from infancy, but children develop these abilities at different rates. Aspects of language include:

- **Phonology:** Creating the sounds of speech
- **Pragmatics:** Communicating verbally and non-verbally in social situations
- **Semantics:** Understanding the rules of what words mean
- **Syntax:** Using grammar and putting sentences together

Read to kids

One of the most important things you can do with your child throughout their early life is to read to them—and not just at bedtime.

Make reading and enjoying books a central part of your day. Reading out loud to your kids from birth and beyond has a major impact on their emerging language and literacy skills.

Look for opportunities to read other things, too, like directions to a board game, letters from family members, holiday cards, online articles, and school newsletters. Hearing new words spoken expands a child's vocabulary and helps them identify unfamiliar words when used in context.

Talk to kids

In addition to reading, make sure you talk to your kids even before they can say their first word. Tell them about the things you are doing or what you're buying in the store. Point out different things and engage them in the world around them. Singing to your child is another excellent way to build your child's language skills.

As they get older, try holding regular conversations, answering questions, and asking for your child's ideas or opinions. All of these activities are an important part of their language development.



DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAIN DELAYS

As children grow and learn, they will pass certain developmental milestones. While every child is different and progresses at a different rate, these milestones provide general guidelines that help parents and caregivers gauge whether or not a child is on track.

You can support your child's growth and development in each of these four areas by understanding these domains and supporting the work your child is doing. Watch the changes taking place in your child and supplement their learning with activities that support their efforts.

The exact time that a child reaches a particular milestone will vary significantly. However, missing one or two milestones can be a cause for concern.

WHEN TO TALK TO A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Talk to a health care provider if you're ever worried your child is not meeting milestones in a particular area. If a delay is identified, they can evaluate your child and recommend different services.

The state of New Jersey offers an early intervention program to support children with developmental delays under the age of 3. If you suspect that your infant or toddler may be experiencing developmental delays, contact Early Intervention System at 888-653-4463. The call is toll-free for New Jersey residents. Once they are over age 3, the community's local school district must provide programming.

So, don't delay determining whether your child needs assistance. There are resources out there to support them should they need it. Developmental Domains: How Children Grow and Change

Health/Nutrition

HOW TO RAISE HEALTHY EATERS IN THE NEW YEAR!



Good food and nutrition are the foundation of children's health and can benefit them for a lifetime. Learning about healthy eating from a young age can help children develop a positive relationship with food well into their adulthood.

- Promote positive habits: Little ones watch everything we do including at mealtime.
- Maintain a healthy relationship with food: Stay away from using food as a reward or punishment.
- Let go of "clean your plate": You might think this will help your child get all of their nutrients needed from food, this behavior can lead to a dislike of foods and a negative association with mealtime.
- Start the day with a healthy breakfast: Mornings can be a rush for many families, however starting the day with a healthy breakfast helps your child get important nutrients for growth and development.
- Make activity fun: Children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day. Why not join in the fun? Be spontaneous when you see an opportunity, like dancing together to your favorite songs. Limit screen time!

PARENT EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

SPECIALIZED PARENT EDUCATION

Parent education for parents of children with special needs is a critical area of support, as it helps them navigate the unique challenges their children face. It aims to empower parents with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to be effective advocates and caregivers for their children.

Signs and Symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder Thursday, January 16, 2025 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Learning Objective: Participants will be able to define Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and the behaviors associated with it:

- Social communication and interaction
- Restricted or repetitive behaviors
- Interests

Instructor: Gina Mondesir, MSW
Credit Hours: 0.0

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://programsforparents-org.zoom.us/j/88328271103>
Meeting ID: 883 2827 1103
Passcode: 190528

Signs and Symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder Saturday, January 18, 2025 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Learning Objective: Participants will be able to define Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and the behaviors associated with it:

- Social communication and interaction
- Restricted or repetitive behaviors
- Interests

Instructor: Marissa Rodriguez Gomes, LMSW
Credit Hours: 0.0

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://programsforparents-org.zoom.us/j/89830507702>
Meeting ID: 898 3050 7702
Passcode: 598854

Introduction- Five Protective Factors Framework Wednesday, January 29, 2025 AM Session 11:00 am - 12:00 pm PM Session 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Learning Objective: Participants will learn Protective Factors are characteristics or strengths of individuals, families, communities or societies that act to mitigate risks and promote positive well-being and healthy development.

Instructor: Twana Thompson Parent Consumer and Education Coordinator
Credit Hours: 0.0

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://programsforparents-org.zoom.us/j/82758521245>
Meeting ID: 827 5852 1245
Passcode: 392446



RESPIRATORY ILLNESS SURVEILLANCE REPORT

- COVID-19 activity is low, however, there have been increases in emergency department visits, hospital admissions, and wastewater viral activity levels.
- The COVID-19 variant predominantly in circulation is KP.3.1.1. (KP.3.1.1 is a newer COVID-19 variant that currently causes nearly 18% of cases of the virus in the U.S. KP.3.1.1 is a sublineage of KP.3, which is the most common variant in the country right now.)
- Seasonal influenza activity continues to increase. Influenza associated emergency department visits, admissions, percent positivity and influenza like illness among outpatient provider visits are higher.
- Among the current circulating influenza viruses, the most frequently reported subtype remains influenza A(H1N1).
- RSV activity is high. There continue to be increases in emergency department visits and hospital admissions.
- Percent positivity is elevated for seasonal coronaviruses and rhinovirus/enterovirus. [respiratory-illness-report-week51-2024.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/our-work/communicable-diseases/communicable-disease-surveillance/communicable-disease-surveillance-reports/communicable-disease-surveillance-report-week51-2024.pdf)

JANUARY FAMILY SUNDAYS



Various Dates Throughout January
<https://tinyurl.com/muhxdy69>



COMMUNITY DAY: LUNAR NEW YEAR



02/08/2025
<https://tinyurl.com/ytarctj2>

YOGA STORY TIME

Yoga Storytime

Monday, January 13 at 11am

Join us for a yoga storytime where kids will listen to stories & then act it out in yoga poses. The session will also include practicing different forms such as sun salutation, breathing exercise and more! Let's bend, unwind, breathe, meditate, and have fun. **Yoga mats are limited. It is encouraged to bring your own.**

For children 0-3 years old and caregivers

Registration Required. Online registration available on the website or call the youth department for assistance.

Join the West Orange Public Library for Yoga Story Time on January 13th 2025 at 11:00 am
<https://bcccls.libcal.com/event/13618682>

GOVERNOR MURPHY SIGNS FREEDOM TO READ ACT

PRINCETON – Governor Phil Murphy signed into law A3446/S2421, known as the Freedom to Read Act, which prevents arbitrary book banning and protects the rights of students, parents, and communities to have free access to age-appropriate books and learning materials at schools and public libraries. The Governor signed the bill at the Princeton Public Library, joined by advocates for intellectual freedom and the bill's legislative sponsors.

"The Freedom to Read Act cements New Jersey's role on the forefront of preventing book bans and protecting the intellectual freedom of our educators and students. Across the nation, we have seen attempts to suppress and censor the stories and experiences of others. I'm proud to amplify the voices of our past and present, as there is no better way for our children to prepare for the future than to read freely," said Governor Murphy.

"Part of our responsibility as educators and education policymakers is to empower students by providing access to diverse ideas, knowledge, and perspectives," said Acting Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer. "The Freedom to Read Act demonstrates our commitment to the educational excellence that defines our state. Through this legislation, we are protecting the integrity of our libraries that are curated by dedicated professionals and making those resources available to help every student to grow as a critical thinker."

"The Freedom to Read Act exemplifies New Jersey's commitment to providing residents with access to high quality library materials, while also acknowledging that the needs of local communities and schools differ. With this Act, New Jersey has assured that local interests guide the development of local collections based on local needs," said Jennifer R. Nelson, New Jersey State Librarian.

Today's legislation requires local school boards and governing bodies of public libraries to establish policies for curation and removal of library materials, including a system of review to address concerns over library materials. The Department of Education, the State Librarian, the New Jersey Association of School Librarians, and the New Jersey School Boards Association will support establishing these policies.

The Freedom to Read Act also provides protections for library staff members against civil and criminal lawsuits related to complying with this law.

Under the law, boards of education and governing boards of public libraries are barred from excluding books because of the origin, background, or views of the material or of its authors. Further, boards of education and governing boards of public libraries are prevented from censoring library material based on a disagreement with a viewpoint, idea, or concept, or solely because an individual finds certain content offensive, unless they are restricting access to developmentally inappropriate material for certain age groups.

The primary sponsors of the Freedom to Read Act are Senator Andrew Zwicker, Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz, Assemblywoman Mitchell Drulis, Assemblywoman Shavonda E. Sumter, and Assemblyman Herb Conaway Jr.

**CLICK THE LINK TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE:
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR | GOVERNOR MURPHY SIGNS FREEDOM TO READ ACT**



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<https://programsforparents.org>

Programs for Parents is a non-profit organization that works to ensure that children get the best possible start in life. It does so by supporting children, families, and child care providers in Essex County through advocacy and action, providing education and referrals, sharing best practices and helping families access available financial resources.

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