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## Adventure Place

# Early Identification Information

### When to Ask for Help

This brochure is intended for parents and professionals working with children to help identify some of the normal milestones in development, as well as to aid in identifying certain 'INDICATORS' that there may be a problem in development.

If a child is having difficulty with the skills and abilities indicated for his or her age, it would be wise to seek a professional evaluation or assessment of the child. This assessment should examine the child's abilities in a range of domains including:

Communication, Social, Emotional, Behavioural,  
Regulatory, Cognitive, Learning,  
Self-help, Motor skills



Adventure Place is a  
Child & Family Early Intervention Agency  
serving children with  
'Special Needs'  
(from birth to six years)  
AND their families,  
since 1972.



### The importance of Early Identification, Assessment and Intervention

When barriers to a child's healthy development are identified EARLY and followed by supportive intervention, the greater the opportunity for:

- Achieving a child's potential by building on his or her strengths and self-esteem
- Increasing parental knowledge, competence, and confidence
- Reducing family stress
- Reducing the risk of longer term, secondary and/or more complex or serious difficulties

### What Kind of Help is Available from Adventure Place?

**Adventure Place Early Intervention Programs** focus on meeting the needs of children and families directly within the community, with an emphasis on providing services in children's natural daily environments including home, school, child care and/or other early child development program settings.

**Early Childhood Specialists** provide consultation and support services to parents and individuals working with children in community settings. Early Childhood Specialists work in partnership with families and caregivers to develop practical strategies to meet children's needs.

**Social Workers** provide support to families whose children are attending the Adventure Place Day Program or other community settings. Social Workers may provide counselling and/or Service Coordination as requested. Appointments can be arranged either in the office, in the home, or in another suitable place within the community.

**Psychological services** involve a trained psychologist or psychoeducational consultant working with parents/guardians and their children, as well as other professionals who might be involved, to gather and interpret information regarding children's intellectual abilities, level of functioning, strengths and needs, and diagnosis where appropriate. Psychological assessment can be performed in the school, home, and/or childcare setting. Psychological assessments are particularly indicated when parents are concerned about children not attaining developmental milestones, displaying serious emotional, behavioural, and/or learning problems, and/or when children have not responded to other early intervention services.

The **Day Program** provides individualized education and treatment programs for preschool-age children with special needs. The program operates in a school setting, and runs from September through June.

## Early Identification

Children's development usually proceeds in a relatively smooth, predictable fashion. The gaining of skills and abilities in childhood is often used as a measure of children's development. Ages at which certain abilities and skills are acquired are known as developmental milestones.

Variations in children's development, and the rate at which developmental milestones are achieved, are to be expected.

There are, however, expected timeframes for reaching certain developmental milestones that help both parents and professionals understand how well a child is developing.

Not all children develop at the same rate and pace.

Not attaining certain developmental milestones within specific periods of time serves as a flag or 'Indicator' for the early identification of potential problems. The persistence of these developmental lags can lead to other secondary problems that may appear as unusual patterns of behaviour, or increases in behavioural difficulties later in development. Losing previously acquired skills is also an 'indicator' of potential problems in development.

It is crucial for parents, professionals and service providers to be aware of normal expectations in children's development, and to be aware of early INDICATORS of problems, in order to identify difficulties early so that intervention can be effective and timely.



## Developmental Milestones\*

### ▶ Birth to One Year

- Reacts to loud noises
- Turns head towards sound
- Rolls from side to back
- Makes sounds
- Opens mouth to take food
- Responds to parents
- Reaches out to be picked up
- Recognizes parent from stranger
- Comforts self
- Watches a moving object
- Glances from hand to object
- Mouths toys
- Explores objects (bangs, shakes)
- Finds partially hidden objects
- Holds bottle to self feed
- Puts food to mouth
- Responds to "up" and "bye-bye"
- Responds to his/her name
- Imitates sounds & few words
- Understands "no"
- Enjoys simple games (peek)
- Reaches for objects
- Sits alone steadily
- Looks at familiar obj(s) when named

#### EARLY INDICATORS - Seek help if the infant:

- Does not turn head towards sound
- Does not reach out to be picked up
- Is unable to roll over
- Does not recognize parent
- Does not explore objects
- Does not make any sounds

### ▶ One to Two Years

- Enjoys rhymes/finger plays
- Moves body to music
- Follows 1 step command
- Wants to please caregiver
- Wants wet clothes changed
- Walks holding furniture
- Climbs into chair
- Enjoys simple stories
- Says names of familiar objects
- Marks with crayons on paper
- Self feeds finger foods
- Sleeps through night
- Chews textured food
- Plays functionally with toys
- Recognizes self in mirror
- Expresses affection

#### EARLY INDICATORS - Seek help if the toddler:

- Does not display earlier milestones
- Does not repeat any words or sounds
- Does not show affection
- Does not chew food
- Does not play functionally with toys
- Does not try to get things by reaching or looking

### ▶ Two to Three Years

- Responds to simple questions
- Follows 2-step directions
- Knows 'big' & 'little'
- Tantrums when frustrated
- Has difficulty sharing
- Displays new independence
- States name
- Speaks short sentences
- Comforts others in distress
- Matches objects to pictures
- Holds pencil in fist
- Engages in make believe
- Tries to wash face/hands
- Drinks liquid from cup
- Walks up stairs with both feet on steps
- Knows use of common objects
- Asks "what's that" questions

#### EARLY INDICATORS - Seek help if the child:

- Does not display earlier milestones
- Does not put words together
- Does not engage in make believe play
- Does not name objects

NOTE: It is normal for a 2-3 year old to have temper tantrums, difficulty sharing and to say "no" a lot.

### ▶ Three to Four Years

- Tells a simple story
- Asks many questions
- Helps out with chores
- Has favourite friend
- Sleeps through night
- Is toilet trained
- Understands "one" vs. "all"
- Labels simple feelings
- Feeds self with spoon
- Stacks 6-7 blocks
- Matches simple shapes
- Counts to 5
- Climbs on play equipment
- Says 3-4 word sentences
- Understands "in, on, under"
- Understands "same, different"
- Walks up stairs alternating feet
- Greets familiar persons
- Engages in simple turn-taking games

#### EARLY INDICATORS - Seek help if the child:

- Does not display earlier milestones
- Does not understand simple questions
- Does not label feelings
- Does not feed him/her self
- Does not greet familiar people
- Does not climb on play equipment
- Does not take turns

### ▶ Four to Five Years

- Explains object use
- Displays imagination
- Uses complete sentences
- Understands long verbal directions
- Understands descriptive words
- Explains what words mean
- Talks about feelings
- Selects own friends
- Follows classroom rules
- Expresses anger verbally
- Fully toilet trained
- Copies simple shapes
- Counts 20 objects
- Sequences numbers
- Changes activity when told
- Waits for turn
- Works alone for short time
- Names most letters

#### EARLY INDICATORS - Seek help if the child:

- Does not display earlier milestones
- Does not demonstrate object use
- Can not define simple words
- Does not use words to express feelings
- Does not follow classroom routines or directions
- Is not toilet trained
- Can not copy simple shapes

### ▶ Five to Six Years

- Recites alphabet
- Reads 3 common signs
- Helps with chores
- Has group of friends
- Apologizes for mistakes
- Catches small ball
- Dresses self
- Uses spoon, fork
- Aware of safety rules
- Reads some printed words
- States birthday month, day
- Counts to beyond 20
- Speaks in sentences

#### EARLY INDICATORS - Seek help if the child:

- Does not display earlier milestones
- Does not know the alphabet
- Does not dress self
- Does not have friends
- Does not use complete sentences
- Does not interact with other children and adults



Developmental Milestones\* adapted from:  
 - Nipissing District Developmental Screen, 2000  
 - Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale-Interview Edition (Sparrow, Balla, Cicchetti, 1984)

- Communication checklist for Children from Birth to Age Five, Toronto Preschool Speech & Language Services  
 - Rosetti Speech and Language test  
 - Developmental Assessment of Young Children, PRO-ED, 1998