

# Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards

## Family Tip Sheets

### Cognition and General Knowledge (Birth to First Grade)

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#### Definition

Cognition and General Knowledge is about children learning to understand the world and focuses on intellectual development:

- Exploration, discovery and problem solving;
- Mathematical thinking;
- Scientific thinking.

#### Rationale

- Children learn new things by making connections between what they are learning and what they already know;
- Reasoning (cognition) is the process by which children make sense of the world through active exploration and learning;
- All learning occurs through play and hands on experiences.

#### *How Can I Help My Child Learn at Home and in the Community?*

##### *Infant*

- Play with your baby providing a variety of interesting objects and toys that make noise. You are your babies' favorite toy!
- Put your child on the floor with interesting toys to encourage him to explore.

##### *Toddler*

- Provide your toddler with water toys during bath time. Measuring cups and plastic cups support learning around size and quantity;
- When playing with your toddler, count people, blocks, animals and other toys.

##### *Preschooler*

- Ask your child to help come up with a solution to questions or problems, "It is raining and we cannot go outside, what should we do instead?"
- Talk to your child about animals that can be seen in the daytime and ones that move around at night.

#### ***Remember – Your Child Learns and Grows Across all Five Domains!***

When you ask your child how and why questions, you are supporting critical thinking (problem solving) you are teaching your child to express himself (language and communication).

#### ***What should I do if I have a concern about my child's development?***

- Talk to your early learning program provider;
- Talk to your doctor. If you and your doctor are still concerned;
- Call Wisconsin First Step 1-800-642-7837 (24 hour service, a parent specialist is available M-F, between 8AM and 4PM);
- If you think your child is a child with a disability, call your County Birth to 3 Services or your Local School District 3 through 5 Services.



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent

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## Family Tip Sheets Cognition and General Knowledge

### *What Does My Child Know? What Can My Child Do?*

*The Milestone Moments published by the Center for Disease Control provides detailed information of what to expect at each milestone in your child's development. The information below includes a sampling of the skills included in the Milestone Moments.*

#### *Infant*

- Pays attention to faces;
- Begins to follow things with eyes and recognize people at a distance;
- Responds to affection;
- Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it;
- Brings things to mouth;
- Begins to pass things from one hand to the other;
- Plays peek-a-boo;
- Picks up things like cereal O's between thumb and index finger;
- Looks at the right picture or thing when it's named;
- Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container;

#### *Toddler*

- Knows what ordinary things are for; for example, telephone, brush, spoon;
- Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures; for example, sits when you say "sit down";
- Begins to sort shapes and colors;
- Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books;

- Plays simple make-believe games;
- Might use one hand more than the other.

#### *Preschooler*

- Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts;
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people;
- Understands what "two" means;
- Copies a circle with pencil or crayon;
- Names some colors and some numbers;
- Understands the idea of counting;
- Starts to understand time;
- Remembers parts of a story;
- Can print some letters or numbers;
- Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes;
- Knows about things used every day, like money and food.

#### **Additional Resource**

##### Brain Development – Zero to Three Baby Brain Map

The Brain Map was adapted in 2006 by ZERO TO THREE. Visitors to the webpage are able to select an age range from the pull-down menu and click on it. Depending on the age range, different hotspots on the brain will appear. Clicking on a hotspot will reveal questions to find out how a baby's brain develops during this period of brain growth. Also learn how to enrich a very young child's development.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/baby-brain-map.html>

Sources: Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, Third Edition, Developmental Continuum, February 2011  
Center for Disease Control and Prevention Developmental Milestones <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>



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