

Children's Creative Development

As your child scribbles with crayons, makes collages with buttons and feathers, and builds with all kinds of blocks, she develops ideas about the world and communicates her thoughts and feelings. As she grows, she thinks creatively and expresses her ideas and feelings visually.

Here's a look at how children develop creative-thinking skills.

A child may

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- * notice characteristics such as light and dark, colors, shapes, movement, textures, and patterns.
- * use all of his senses—and feelings—to interpret the world around him.
- * communicate through postures, gestures, facial expressions, cries, and other sounds, and—after the first year—in words and phrases.
- * explore new things and be drawn to materials and objects with bright colors and interesting textures.
- * see things in his own way—a combination of what's there and his own interpretation.

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- * enjoy scribbling but not distinguish between the drawing and the object she's drawing with, so the crayon will gallop across the paper as she draws a horse trotting.
- * not distinguish the paper from the world beyond—her marks may go off the sheet.
- * enjoy exploring new materials.
- * use her creations as vehicles for fantasies, stories, or symbolic play.
- * name her scribbling when adults ask what she has drawn, even though she didn't intend to draw anything in particular.
- * develop a sense of spatial relations.

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- * discover that she can place blocks or make marks on paper in a way that represents an object's features.
- * draw recognizable shapes, such as circles, ovals, rectangles, triangles, crosses, and combinations of these shapes.
- * begin creating with a specific intention—wanting to draw a man or build a firehouse.

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- * acquire a sense of ownership of his creations.
- * attempt to use graphic symbols to represent objects.
- * respond to an accidental slip of the marker or drips from the brush by incorporating them into the story or the drawing: "Then it began to rain—see the drops of purple rain? Then ..."
- * visually represent particular emotions, such as joy, sadness, and anger.

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- * learn to control the direction and length of a line he's drawing.
- * develop a personal style in his drawings and other creations.
- * draw more complex pictures—a sun in the sky above two girls and a flower in the ground.
- * make more realistic images, distinguishing between people and animals, males and females, adults and children.

Literacy Development *Age by Age*

Here's a look at how children go from imitating sounds to recognizing simple words to becoming readers and writers.

Children may

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- * experiment with language by making sounds that imitate the tones and rhythms of adult talk.
- * delight in listening to familiar jingles and rhymes.
- * play along in games such as peekaboo and pattycake.
- * show interest in books that feature familiar objects.
- * begin to name these objects out loud.
- * participate in making the sounds of animals they see in books.

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- * enjoy listening to stories, rhymes, and songs; doing finger plays; looking at books.
- * understand that their written name signifies something special that pertains specifically to them.
- * scribble enthusiastically.

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- * delight in conversing and being listened and responded to.
- * recognize examples of print in their environment.
- * know that writing is a form of communication.
- * enjoy dictating comments about artwork and letters.
- * know that people read for a purpose.

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- * realize that reading moves left to right, top to bottom.
- * learn that print, rather than pictures, carries the meaning of the story.
- * pretend to read, using visual cues to remember the words to their favorite stories.
- * understand that writing is used to convey messages and has a specific form and symbol system.
- * recognize and name some letters.
- * write some letters.
- * enjoy playing games involving written words and numbers.

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- * recognize and identify some of the sounds that letters represent.
- * sound out some words.
- * enjoy writing and giving written messages to others.
- * attempt to do their own writing, using invented and standard spelling.
- * begin to write the words they hear.
- * learn to leave spaces between words.
- * enjoy reading favorite books, simple predictable books, and books they have written.
- * love to browse through beautiful books.

How Children Problem Solve

Children are natural problem solvers, eager to make sense of their world.

A child may

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- * test the limits of his body and abilities. "How far can I reach?" "What happens when I push on that?"
- * experiment with whatever he can touch, taste, smell, and hear.
- * explore cause and effect, noticing what happens when he does something and using that information to decide whether or not to take that action again (dropping food off the high-chair tray for an adult to pick up).

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- * create new and unexpected uses for toys and materials.
- * experiment with the same problem over and over again, such as stacking blocks to build a tower that keeps falling down.
- * test her physical problem-solving skills in such ways as climbing over chairs instead of going around them and sliding down the stairs on her bottom.

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- * experiment with materials in slightly more creative and detailed ways than twos, such as using toy bananas as telephones or pots as hats.
- * use language in the problem-solving process.
- * try to make something work when he is having difficulty—for example, pounding in puzzle pieces where they don't fit.

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- * construct elaborate ways to solve problems.
- * begin to get very involved in solving social problems. Fours and fives are highly concerned about rules and helping others find solutions.
- * enjoy experimenting and problem solving with ideas as well as concrete materials. Questions like "What will happen if ...?" and "What might happen next?" naturally arise as fours and fives begin to imagine new situations.

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- * experiment with helping others work out a problem before she turns to an adult.
- * be more likely to consider and discuss how possible solutions might work before trying them out.
- * test the limits of her body with large-motor problem-solving activities—looking to see how far, how long, and how high she can move.

Social /Emotional Development

Here's a look at some important milestones in the area of social/emotional development that take place during a child's first six years.

Children may

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- ▶ be increasingly alert to sights and sounds.
- ▶ follow you with eager eyes and warm to the sight of your face.
- ▶ smile in response to your expressions.
- ▶ engage, disengage, then reengage with you for short periods of time.
- ▶ begin to respond to your gestures with gestures of their own.
- ▶ imitate interactions and look expectantly for your response.
- ▶ express desires and wants by pointing.

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- ▶ engage in pretend play with others.
- ▶ enlist your help to do pretend dramas dealing with closeness, nurturing, and care; enjoy pretend play alone.
- ▶ use words or combine gestures to express feelings.
- ▶ communicate their desire for closeness by gesturing.
- ▶ develop the ability to recover from anger.

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- ▶ at times begin to distinguish between what is real and what isn't; use logical thinking.
- ▶ make pretend play more complex so that one theme leads to another.
- ▶ follow rules and respond to limits; feel optimistic and confident.
- ▶ begin to reason about feelings and connect them to behaviors (for example, behaving nicely pleases you); try hard to learn to do something.

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- ▶ enhance pretend play by adding complexity and depth to themes and roles.
- ▶ enjoy participating in rule making and talking about what is fair and what is not.
- ▶ talk about their own feelings and begin to understand the feelings of others.
- ▶ feel and express empathy.

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- ▶ enjoy playing and working independently.
- ▶ enjoy taking care of their own needs.
- ▶ engage in cooperative play.
- ▶ react to normal frustrations in constructive ways.
- ▶ understand and accept limits and routines.
- ▶ show an understanding of personal rights and responsibilities.

The Development of Play

Age by Age

Here's a look at how children's play progresses from playing side by side to playing interactively.

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- * like to look at other babies.
- * love the company of other children.
- * laugh at the antics of siblings.
- * join in activities which are centered around them.
- * engage in parallel play, offering toys but not playing together with other children.

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- * begin to play with other children.
- * enjoy simple games.
- * squabble and fight with others.
- * not share toys and can become possessive and uncooperative.
- * increasingly converse with other children.
- * still not be able to play with others if they have had little social experience.

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- * play more complex and interesting games.
- * form stronger friendships.
- * tease and taunt siblings.
- * make and break friendships easily.
- * copy other children.
- * not switch easily between pretend and reality.

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- * firm up friendships as they reach school age.
- * become more independent, not all doing the same thing at the same time.
- * take on separate roles in complex games.
- * explain games to other children.
- * describe other children as "best friends."
- * indicate to others when to "pretend" and when something is "real."

COOPERATION AGE-BY-AGE

0 to 6 months

The true social smile begins at about 6 months. Babies' social play is generally noticed during feeding and bathing. They respond to any physical contact game such as tickles, head on baby's tummy, and bouncing. They become interested in toys in their crib or playpen and will play by kicking a mobile or waving a rattle. This is the beginning of socialization and cooperation in its simplest form.

6 months to 1 year

From about 6 months on to one year, a child can share a cookie with a teacher or share blocks when they build a tower. As the teacher puts one block on top of another and the baby follows suit, they are taking turns and cooperating. They can interact with peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake and share simple dancing and singing games. Reading to a child and helping her point to the pictures is an important social activity.

1 to 2 years

Children at this age can be helpful by bringing you objects you request and following simple directions (open the door, put the pillow on the bed). They enjoy being helpers. They try to feed themselves and their dolls. They hold their own cup and offer you a drink. They use their own name and love to sing with you and listen to rhymes. They do say many "No's," and although they share with you, they may not be willing to share with other toddlers. They understand nonverbal cues and can tell by the expressions on your face when they have misbehaved. At this age, since a child is not sure of her identity, giving away something can feel like giving away a part of herself.

2 to 3 years

Children ask countless questions. They want to please others, are friendly to most adults, and like to talk to them. They are now learning to wait for their turn. They are helpful by setting the table for snack, clearing the table, or using a sponge to wipe the table. They like to help adults. They are learning to share and will offer a child another toy. They are learning to say "Please," "May I," "Thank you," and "Excuse me." They like to play group games and begin to follow simple rules. They are not always fair in their play, but much more so than the toddler.

4 to 5 years

Children in this age group like to use their imagination and begin to develop plots, change characters' voices, and assume different roles. Play allows them to become flexible, creative, develop vocabulary, practice empathy, delay gratification, and control their aggression. They invent complex games and, in doing so, share, cooperate, and help one another. They begin to learn about others' cultures and values. They understand what a family is and that there are different kinds of families. More feelings and emotions are expressed in their play. They can play "follow the leader" types of games. They begin to play board games where they learn to take turns and cooperate.

Communication—Stage by Stage

Children's language develops in predictable stages. These stages are outlined below.

Infants Newborn to 12-month-olds may:	Toddlers 1- to 2-year-olds may:	Preschoolers 3- to 4-year-olds may:	Kindergarten and Early Primary Grades 5- to 6-year-olds may:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › make eye contact and smile; babble or coo to communicate comfort or happiness; › use arms and legs to express joy, excitement, or anger; › repeat babbles (such as <i>da, da</i> or <i>ma, ma</i>), which sound like words; › understand language (by 8 to 12 months); for example, putting a hat on their head when told to do so; › say their first words; › express an entire sentence in one word; <i>up</i> can mean <i>Pick me up</i>, <i>There's a bird up there</i>, or <i>My car is up on the shelf</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › communicate using sounds and utterances with adult intonation; › engage in telegraphic speech (using one or two words) to communicate. "Daddy, come," "Oh, oh, I fall," or "All gone," are used instead of full sentences such as, "Daddy, come over here and help me"; › begin to combine words; › know between 20 and 50 words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › make dramatic gains in terms of language development, speaking in nearly complete sentences; › increase vocabulary to between 300 and 2,000 words; › use pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, articles, and possessives; › play with language, making up words and rhymes and repeating chants ("Nicey, dicey, all insidey, apple pie"); › talk as if practicing language, with monologues; › ask many <i>why</i> questions, as well as <i>how</i> and <i>when</i>; › adapt speech to listeners; › tell a simple story, but not in sequence; › talk about their actions as if trying to articulate what they are doing; › take turns in conversations, still interrupting to talk about themselves; › increase the length of their sentences; sentence structure may be more complete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › continue to expand vocabulary, to about 5,000 to 8,000 words; › be extremely articulate, with adultlike speech; › be aware that a word can have more than one meaning; › begin to use language to control situations; › often misunderstand words and use them in humorous ways; › carry on conversations with others, yet still want to dominate.

Explore Their World: Age by Age

AGE	EXPLORATION
One-year-olds may:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» use developing senses to explore their world;» know objects exist even when hidden, and actively search for out-of-sight objects.
Two-year-olds may:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» expand sensory explorations, running their hands over things, roaming and cruising in- and out-of-doors, and handling everything in reach;» identify familiar objects by touch;» imitate the use of an object long after they observe others using the object; for instance, pouring raisins into a bowl at home after watching a teacher do so at school.
Three-year-olds may:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» label objects as <i>hard</i> or <i>soft</i>, <i>large</i> or <i>small</i>, <i>heavy</i> or <i>light</i>;» begin to draw shapes of objects, circles, squares;» still explore their world through their senses.
Four-year-olds may:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» attend to objects and events in more planned-out ways;» build with blocks, string beads, draw recognizable representations of objects;» draw objects in relation to one another.
Five-year-olds may:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» have a wealth of conceptions about objects and how they work;» have increasingly symbolic thought. The ability to mentally or symbolically represent objects, events, and actions is accompanied by more actions that are increasingly planned and goal directed.

Young Children's Physical Skills

Age	Typical Skills
2-3	<p>A child may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › walk up and down stairs; jump off one step; › kick a ball; › stand and walk on tiptoe; › run; dodge.
3-4	<p>A child may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › walk unself-consciously, backward and forward; turn and stop well; › jump off low steps or objects, but find it hard to jump over objects; › begin to ride trikes and pump on swings; › stand on one foot unsteadily; balance with difficulty on low 4-inch-wide balance beam, watching feet; › play actively, but tire suddenly.
4-5	<p>A child may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › skip unevenly; run well; › stand on one foot for five seconds or more; master the low balance beam; › alternate feet when walking down stairs; judge well when placing feet on climbing structures; › jump on a small trampoline; › show awareness of things in environment, such as cars on streets, but needs supervision and help protecting self; › have increased endurance in play, but needs intakes of water and food.
5-6	<p>A child may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › walk backward quickly; skip and run with agility and speed; › incorporate motor skills into games; › walk a 2-inch balance beam easily; jump over objects; › hop well; jump down several steps; jump rope; › climb well; coordinate movements for swimming or bike riding; › show uneven perceptual judgment; › show high energy levels in play; rarely fatigue; find inactivity difficult and seek active games and environments.
6+	<p>A child may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › have increased coordination for catching and throwing; › be able to participate in active games with rules; › sequence motor activities, for gymnastics, shooting baskets; › have improved reaction time in responding to thrown balls or oncoming vehicles.

Motor Skills

Age by Age

One month

Large-Motor Skills

- * Lifts chin when placed on stomach

Two months

Large-Motor Skills

- * Lifts chest well above surface when placed on stomach

Three to Four months

Large-Motor Skills

- * Reaches for objects, but unsteadily
- * Holds up head steadily
- * Rolls from side to back and from back to side
- * Has complete head control when sitting on an adult's lap
- * Holds head erect when carried

Five to Six months

Large-Motor Skills

- * Sits alone briefly
- * Reaches and grasps successfully, but awkwardly
- * Turns completely over when laid on back or stomach
- * Prefers to sit up with support

Small-Motor Skills

- * Reaches and grasps successfully but awkwardly
- * Uses hands to reach, grasp, crumble, bang, and splash

Seven to Eight months

Large-Motor Skills

- * Reaches for spoon
- * Pulls self up while holding onto furniture
- * Sits up steadily
- * Propels self by arms, knees, or squirming motions

Small-Motor Skills

- * Eats with fingers
- * Picks up large objects

Nine to 10 months

Large-Motor Skills

- * Walks when led
- * Reaches for and manipulates objects with good control
- * Stands holding onto furniture or other supports
- * Crawls on hands and knees

Small-Motor Skills

- * Reaches for and manipulates objects with good control
- * Picks up medium-sized objects as well as larger ones
- * Uses a spoon more skillfully

11 to 12 months

Large-Motor Skills

- * Stands alone
- * May walk alone

Small-Motor Skills

- * Shows a preference for one hand over the other
- * Holds and drinks from a cup
- * Fits blocks, boxes, or nesting toys inside each other
- * Picks up small objects using thumb and forefinger

12 to 18 months

Large-Motor Skills

- * Improves from walking a few unsteady steps to walking well
- * Slides down stairs backward, one step at a time
- * Stoops to pick up toys

Small-Motor Skills

- * Turns pages of a book, several pages at a time
- * Picks up small objects easily, using thumb and forefinger
- * Scribbles

18 to 24 months

Large-Motor Skills

- * Runs fairly well
- * Stands on one foot
- * Learns to walk up and down stairs, holding on, both feet on each step
- * Throws objects overhand

Small-Motor Skills

- * Buttons large buttons
- * Pulls down zippers
- * Turns a doorknob

24 to 30 months

Large-Motor Skills

- * Walks with more coordination and confidence
- * Climbs even in unsafe places
- * Jumps off bottom step
- * Pushes self on wheeled toys

Small-Motor Skills

- * Turns pages of a book, one at a time
- * Strings large beads
- * Builds towers of about six blocks

30 to 36 months

Large-Motor Skills

- * Runs but may not be able to stop smoothly
- * Alternates feet going up stairs, but not going down
- * Throws balls overhand, but inaccurately
- * Kicks balls

Small-Motor Skills

- * Builds towers of about eight blocks
- * Draws horizontal and vertical lines
- * Screws lids on and off containers

Three years

Large-Motor Skills

- * Jumps up and down in place
- * Walks on tiptoe
- * Rides a tricycle
- * Catches a ball with arms straight

Small-Motor Skills

- * Builds towers of about

nine or 10 blocks

- * Makes a bridge from three blocks
- * Cuts with scissors
- * Draws recognizable pictures
- * Uses a fork and spoon with little spilling

Four years

Large-Motor Skills

- * Gallops and hops
- * Dresses and undresses self
- * Jumps forward as well as in place
- * Throws overhand with body control

Small-Motor Skills

- * Laces shoes
- * Cuts on line with scissors

Five years

Large-Motor Skills

- * Stands and balances on tiptoe for short periods and skips, alternating feet

Small-Motor Skills

- * Ties shoelaces
- * Draws recognizable people
- * Writes alphabet letters
- * Buttons, snaps, and zips clothes

6 years

Large-Motor Skills

- * Throws and catches balls with more ease and accuracy

Small-Motor Skills

- * Cuts, pastes, molds, and colors skillfully
- * Writes an entire word

MAKING MARKS AND DISCOVERING FORMS

Toddler to 3-year-old may:

- * boldly investigate with basic materials such as markers, paints and crayons.
- * scribble using simple, random marks—dots, roving lines, or masses of repetitive lines that reflect the circular movements of their arms.
- * discover that her scribbles give way to circles, circles inside of circles, radiating sun-like forms, mandalas (circles divided into sections), and repetitive line formations. This is non-objective art. This art is "about" art itself—colors, shapes, lines, and such—and represent a mood or feeling, rather than a particular thing.
- * begin to recognize that the marks she makes can represent objects in the real world. She may "name" her creations, for example saying, "This is mustard," about a drawing full of round, brownish/yellow forms. But the process, not the representation, is still most important.

3- to 4-year-old may:

- * begin to experiment with symbolic art—art that represents objects. He may continue to draw circles, concentric circles, radiating lines, and other basic forms, but is increasingly concerned with using these forms to make "real things."
- * create forms that become more detailed. Yet, most fours are unable to share all their ideas at once and tend to focus on a few features at a time. For example, one day a child may add eyes and ears to a picture of a face and another time draw only the mouth and nose.
- * represent several different ideas on a page, but instead of making objects interrelate, tend to place them randomly. For example, a child may put a person in the middle of the page, perhaps a house and a large tree near the bottom, and maybe circular scribbles floating near the top.

5- to 6-year-old may:

- * have an increasing drive to create realistic art. By kindergarten, many children begin to place objects in relation to one another, although it's still common for them to leave out or exaggerate objects, sizes, and shapes.
- * still enjoy working non-objectively as well as symbolically. Many children this age take great delight in creating seas of forms and shapes, which are often full of fantasy.
- * may have gained a great deal of physical knowledge, and are able to handle tools and materials with considerable skill. Now they enjoy more demanding kinds of activities. Problem solving becomes an exciting challenge as the child works to figure out, for example, how to keep paint from running down easel paper or how to secure a heavy piece of plastic foam to a cardboard base.

MATH Around the Room

Children's Math Development

Here's a look at how children develop math skills, age by age—and how you can help them along the path to math.

A child may

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- * use all her senses to identify familiar objects and people around her.
- * begin to predict and anticipate sequences of events.
- * notice cause-and-effect relationships.
- * begin to classify objects in a simple but thoughtful manner—for example, toys that roll, toys that don't.
- * use language to classify objects according to basic characteristics, such as type (toy animals, blocks).
- * begin to use relationship words and comparative language, such as bigger and under.

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- * begin to understand the concept and use of numbers—she realizes, for example, that when she counts her crackers, each is given one number.
- * count three or four objects, but then count the same object twice or skip objects.
- * understand many directional and relational words, such as straight and behind.
- * be able to fit large puzzle pieces into place, demonstrating an understanding of the relationships between geometric shapes.
- * notice patterns in the things he sees and hears.
- * be able to make cause-and-effect predictions.

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- * recognize and look for geometric shapes in the environment.
- * enjoy sorting and classifying objects, usually by only one characteristic at a time—color, shape, size.
- * begin to classify things by their uses.
- * notice and compare similarities and differences.

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- * enjoy playing games involving numbers.
- * struggle with classifications that aren't obvious.
- * count objects or people up to 10 or 20 with less skip-counting or double counting.
- * understand that symbols represent complex patterns.
- * solve multiple-piece puzzles by recognizing and matching geometric shapes.
- * use concepts such as height, size, and length to compare objects.

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- * begin to be able to add small numbers in his head but still be most comfortable adding real objects he can actually touch and move.
- * classify objects according to more than one characteristic—sorting the round and blue blocks and the red square ones.
- * have a long attention span for activities that interest him.
- * use positional words to explain spatial relationships.

Development of Math Concepts Age by Age

	0–3 years	4 years	5 years	6–7 years
General Development	Children may:	Children may:	Children may:	Children may:
Forming Concepts	learn concepts in action	learn concepts in an example-by-example way	learn concepts through a particular example	more easily learn concepts that are thought of in terms of rules
Representing and Symbolizing	at age 2, begin to develop mental representations, including symbols			represent and mentally “undo” a process
NUMBERS				
Number Concepts	recognize very small numbers, nonverbally, and then with numerical labels, such as <i>two</i> ; at about age 2, represent numbers exactly; begin to use the <i>stable-order rule</i> , and even the <i>abstraction rule</i> , in counting small collections	maintain the <i>one-to-one rule</i> in counting increasingly large collections; understand the <i>cardinal rule</i> (the last number word in counting tells how many are in the collection)	begin to count, not just discrete objects, but <i>classes</i> , such as how many different colors of blocks there are, and units, such as how many whole eggs, when some halves are together and some are not; begin to understand the implica-	tions of the <i>order-irrelevance rule</i>
Comparing Numbers	visually determine whether very small collections have the same amount, or which has more	use counting or matching to compare two collections of up to five objects, despite deceptive appearances	use counting to compare two collections, even if the objects they contain are a mixture of sizes and types	use counting to accurately compare two collections, even if the collection with the smaller number has objects that are larger in size
Adding and Subtracting	recognize how many objects should be present when one is added or taken away from a very small collection	solve word problems using objects, with sums of up to five	solve word problems using counting-based strategies; for example, when asked, “If you had four toys and got two more toys, how many would you have?” will count four fingers, then count up with two more	fingers
GEOMETRY AND MAPS				
Shapes	match simple shapes	recognize and name variations of the circle, square, triangle, and rectangle	recognize and name shapes in various orientations, sizes, and types; start to recognize the parts of shapes, such as sides and angles	sort shapes into classes based on their attributes, such as triangles’ having three straight sides
Maps	understand and use ideas such as over, under, above, on, beside, next to, between	build a simple but meaningful map with landscape toys, such as houses, cars, and trees; learn a simple route from a map	place toy objects in the correct relative position to make a map of the classroom	make and follow maps of familiar areas, using some measurements
PATTERNS AND ALGEBRA				
Patterns and the Number Patterns Leading to Algebra	act out patterns, such as jumping to the left, right, left, right; observe repeating patterns, such as a block standing, then lying down, then standing	copy simple repeating patterns, such as ABBAB-BABB	separate the “core unit” in patterns, such as ABA in ABAABAABA; find patterns in math, i.e., adding one to a number results in the next “counting number”	create, recognize, and use early algebraic patterns; for example, subtracting a number from itself gives you zero, or $n - n = 0$