

The Hawai'i Early Learning & Development Standards (HELDS)

Supplemental Guides for Infants and Toddlers

Moving and Exploring: Explorers 8–18 Months



This Guide was developed by the University of Hawai'i Center on the Family, with support from the Hawai'i P20 Partnerships for Education. © 2013



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The Hawai'i Early Learning and Development Standards (HELDS) describe what young children, ages birth through five, typically should know and/or be able to do at different periods in their developmental progression. During this period, the architecture of a child's brain and nervous system is under construction and this development becomes the foundation for learning in the school years. By understanding the HELDS standards and how learning established in an earlier period is the basis for future learning, parents and caregivers can provide children with a strong foundation to become lifelong learners.

HELDS Supplemental Guides for Infants and Toddlers

The HELDS Supplemental Guides for Infants and Toddlers is a multi-part series that looks at three distinct phases of development within the first two years of life: *Building Security* (birth–8 months), *Moving and Exploring* (8–18 months), and *Discovering Identity* (18–24 months). Each guide illustrates the rapid growth and unique developmental needs of children during a particular period.

The guides provide information on:

- typical infant or toddler behaviors within each of the HELDS domains, listed in approximate sequence of development;
- specific ways in which caregivers can support development and learning; and
- key infant and toddler outcomes that result from these supports.

The capabilities, interests, and needs of a younger infant (e.g., a 6-month-old) differ greatly from those of an older, more mobile infant (e.g., a 9-month-old) and those of a toddler (e.g., a 19-month-old). Within any phase there are also normal variations in development from child to child. Effective caregivers understand these differences and tailor their practices accordingly. The guides provide a starting place for caregivers to reflect on the extent to which their current strategies, interactions, environments, and care plans support optimal development. While the examples listed are not exhaustive, they provide an overall picture of healthy development and quality caregiving.

Moving and Exploring: Explorers 8–18 Months

The hallmarks of this developmental period are mobility and exploration. Being able to move independently opens up a whole new world of experiences for the child. Areas of the brain responsible for motor development, responsiveness to speech sounds, problem-solving, and coordinating sensory input (vision, touch, etc.) with motor control show rapid change and are affected by the explorer's environment and daily experiences. Adults foster the explorer's self-motivated learning by providing supervision in a safe environment where the child can explore freely, learn, and practice new skills. The growth that occurs during the explorer period builds on the foundation established in the infancy period and continues to set the stage for later learning and development. By being intentional in practice and providing the highest quality of care, adults help the explorer develop optimally within and across the HELDS domains and acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for future success.

HELDS DOMAIN

Physical Well-Being, Health and Motor Development

This domain encompasses physical growth and maturation, including the ability to move and use the body. The explorer practices the purposeful use of large and small muscles, and begins to make simple attempts at self-care.

Examples of typical explorer behaviors:



- Transfers objects between hands
- Pulls to standing position or walks supported by furniture or people
- Stacks two or more blocks
- Holds crayons in fist and attempts to scribble
- Climbs up and scoots down stairs
- Begins to walk on own
- Attempts to eat or drink using utensils and cups
- Rolls or drops ball with two hands
- Shows interest in self-care, e.g., attempts to undress/dress self

Examples of caregiver practices that support development:



- Provides safe and open areas where the explorer can move freely
- Provides low and stable objects for climbing
- Plays games that foster motor coordination e.g., rolling a ball back and forth
- Provides stacking, riding, and push toys
- Stays close to the unstable explorer who is learning to stand and walk
- Provides a variety of materials to grasp, push, bang, clap, throw, drop, and carry
- Provides fine motor materials, e.g., jumbo crayons and brushes, play dough, finger paints
- Introduces a child size spoon or fork and cup at meal times
- Provides opportunities to participate in self-care routines, e.g., rub soapy hands together during hand washing

These types of caregiver supports help explorer to:



- Use body with intention
- Use and strengthen large muscles, e.g., arms, legs
- Use and strengthen small muscles, e.g., facial muscles, fingers hands, and toes
- Develop muscle coordination
- Develop self-help skills



Social and Emotional Development

This domain includes the ability to regulate behaviors and emotions and to form healthy relationships. Building on the trust and security established earlier, the explorer gains an increased awareness of self as a separate individual, and shows interest in new experiences and interactions with others.

- Recognizes self in mirror
- Shows preference for primary caregivers over others
- May be anxious when separated from caregiver or cautious in the presence of strangers
- Is comforted by familiar caregiver or objects when hurt, sad, tired, or scared
- Shows affection through physical contact
- Imitates others' actions or words
- Participates in social routines when prompted, e.g., wave hi and bye, kiss goodnight
- Shows pleasure when completing a simple task or activity
- Shows interest in and wants to be close to other children
- Shows/offers food or objects to others, but may take it back
- Looks at caregiver for reassurance or reaction when exploring

- Provides consistent, predictable routines throughout the day
- Uses physical affection, eye contact, a positive tone of voice, and smiles throughout the day to communicate warmth and affection
- Recognizes and responds quickly and calmly to address the explorer's emotional needs
- Acknowledges the explorer's feelings by naming the emotion that is being experienced
- Provides simple explanations or alternatives when unable to meet the explorer's desires
- Takes time daily to give each explorer full uninterrupted attention
- Provides opportunities for the explorer to interact with other children
- Encourages and shows delight in the explorer's discoveries
- Uses words or familiar phrases from the explorer's home language

- Feel secure and safe to explore
- Learn to regulate behaviors
- Recognize self as separate from others
- Build relationships with others

Approaches to Learning

This domain encompasses the processes that underlie learning. The explorer continues to develop and use higher levels of attention, memory, persistence, curiosity, and problem solving skills.

- Uses senses to observe and explore objects, people and places with more intentionality, e.g., smells objects, touches to explore new textures
- Physically tries out solutions to find one that works, e.g. attempts to put a square peg in a round hole before using the round peg
- Explores objects as tools, e.g., bangs spoon to make sounds
- Engages in activities for a very short period of time
- Recognizes and seeks own possessions, e.g., blanket, favorite toy

- Provides consistent and predictable routines to help the explorer anticipate what comes next
- Provides ample space, time, and materials to encourage exploration
- Responds with delight and enthusiasm when the explorer makes new discoveries
- Allows the explorer time to complete a simple activity
- Talks about what the explorer may be thinking, wondering, or discovering
- Builds on the explorer's interests when planning activities and introducing new experiences
- Provides materials and activities that encourage problem solving

- Build curiosity and creativity
- Develop a deeper level of attentiveness towards objects of interest
- Increase memory capacity
- Build persistence in trying to figure out how things work



Cognition and General Knowledge

This domain includes thinking, reasoning, and using information to acquire knowledge and understanding of one's world. The explorer begins to look across objects, events, and people for similarities, differences, or associations.

- Distinguishes between familiar and unfamiliar people or objects
- Begins to associate labels or names with objects, e.g., looks at correct item when it is named
- Seeks hidden objects
- Shows understanding of the meaning of simple directional words, e.g., “up” and “down”
- Watches and imitates how others use objects for intended purposes, e.g., cup for drinking, hair brush for grooming
- Intentionally causes effects, e.g., splashes water, drops objects to get a reaction
- Explores spaces, e.g., crawls into small spaces, climbs in and out of boxes
- Begins to understand basic concept of quantity, e.g., “more”
- Begins to recognize established routines and participates with prompting

- Exposes the explorer to a variety of places, sights and sounds, e.g., indoors and outdoors, and a variety of tactile experiences, e.g., different objects to touch, surfaces to play on
- Plays hide and seek games using partially hidden favorite toys
- Uses directional words while narrating what the explorer is doing and experiencing, e.g., “You’re crawling through the tunnel!”
- Associates objects and their characteristics, e.g., “Your blanket is soft,” “The ball is round”
- Provides opportunities for the explorer to independently discover and learn how things work
- Shows how to use objects for their intended purpose, e.g., blocks for stacking, spoon for eating, toothbrush for hygiene
- Counts objects aloud with the explorer
- Provides simple directions using descriptive words, e.g., “Put the blanket over the doll”

- Understand basic concepts about the physical world, e.g., gravity, distance, and space
- Recognize that objects and people have attributes
- Recognize that objects exist even when they are not seen
- Develop understanding of the concept of cause and effect



English Language Arts and Literacy

This domain encompasses response to and use of communication. The explorer's ability to understand spoken language is greater than the ability to say words. The child uses gestures, sounds, and words to converse with others.

- Pulls on caregiver or repeats sounds and gestures to get attention or assistance
- Babbles using conversation-like rhythm and intonation
- Responds to simple verbal requests, e.g., lifts arms when an adult says “Want me to carry you?”
- Begins to point to named objects, e.g., body parts, pictures in books
- Says first words
- Uses primarily one-word expressions or gestures, e.g., says “uh-oh,” nods, or shakes head
- Shows an interest in books and wants to hear favorite stories or have same books read repeatedly
- Scribbles in large circular movements
- Says between 20-25 words

- Responds to the explorer's verbal and non-verbal communication
- Labels and narrates what the caregiver, the explorer, and others are doing and experiencing
- Speaks clearly, simply, and slowly while interacting with the explorer
- Participates in short turn-taking conversations with the explorer
- Reads short picture books, sings songs, shares stories or nursery rhymes with the explorer
- Provides a variety of simple word books for the explorer to use
- Varies vocabulary and sentence length when talking with the explorer
- Encourages the explorer to use writing materials, e.g., jumbo crayons

- Develop early communication skills
- Increase listening skills
- Connect words and sounds with experiences and actions
- Build vocabulary
- Develop an interest in and enjoyment of literacy activities

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