

## ***IDAHO EARLY LEARNING EGUIDELINES***

### **GOAL 14: CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN EXPLORATORY PLAY.**

**Domain 1:** Approaches to Learning and Cognitive Development

**Sub-Domain:** Cognition and Cognitive Processes

[Birth through 8 Months](#)

[6 to 18 Months](#)

[16 to 38 Months](#)

[36 to 60 Months](#)

[60 Months through Kindergarten](#)

[First, Second, and Third Grades](#)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT			
SUB-DOMAIN: COGNITION AND COGNITIVE PROCESSES			
REPRESENTATIONAL THOUGHT AND PLAY			
GOAL 14. CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN EXPLORATORY PLAY.			
Age Range	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p><b>Birth through 8 Months</b></p>	<p>Gains stability and balance among senses and uses those senses to evoke relaxation and calmness that supports exploration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gathers information through the senses (e.g. mouthing, grasping, reaching).</li> <li>▪ Explores with more than one sense at a time (e.g. uses sight, touch, taste, and hearing to examine and explore a toy).</li> <li>▪ Gazes at stimulating objects in the environment.</li> <li>▪ Initiates familiar play scheme (banging objects, grabbing spoon).</li> <li>▪ Uses and repeats action to cause change in what they see, hear, and feel.</li> <li>▪ Reacts to other babies or reflection in mirror.</li> <li>▪ Responds to music, shiny objects, and textures.</li> <li>▪ Communicates sensory preferences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consistently respond and create predictable routines so infant feels safe and secure to explore.</li> <li>▪ Engage in playful interactions allowing baby to explore your face.</li> <li>▪ Provide toys and experiences that appeal to all senses.</li> <li>▪ Engage in reciprocal play such a Peek-a-Boo, hand clapping, stretching, and moving songs and games.</li> <li>▪ Set up environment to stimulate movement and action in exploration (e.g. objects just beyond reach so child must roll, bat, or kick to cause noise or action).</li> <li>▪ Describe what baby sees, hears, and does.</li> <li>▪ Respond to child's cues as to likes and avoids (e.g. loud sounds, bright lights, pleasing sounds, comforting textures).</li> </ul>

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Age Range	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
6 to 18 Months	Use sensory motor skills to engage with people and objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses all five senses to examine different objects with attention to detail.</li> <li>▪ Spontaneously initiates movement and motor play.</li> <li>▪ Waves, pinches, throws, drops, shakes, kicks, hits, pats, rolls, mouths, bats at, and manipulates objects.</li> <li>▪ Makes sounds, including self-talk while playing.</li> <li>▪ Engages in reciprocal play with balls or throwing toys.</li> <li>▪ Seeks out filling and dumping or pushing and pulling activities.</li> <li>▪ Responds to movement games such as Hokey Pokey, dancing, Eensy Weensy Spider.</li> <li>▪ Seeks and manipulates objects child sees caregivers use (keys, cell phones, hairbrushes, writing utensils).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a safe environment for exploring and movement.</li> <li>▪ Engage in games with passing and rolling balls, and soft toys.</li> <li>▪ Explain what is occurring and what comes next during every day routines.</li> <li>▪ Provide an array of play objects that meet child's current development.</li> <li>▪ Play music, sing songs, and dance with child.</li> <li>▪ Because mouthing is a primary means of sensory exploration, supervision at all times is necessary.</li> </ul>

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Age Range	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
16 to 38 Months	Use sensory motor play to extend the use of materials in functional ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Matches and sorts by single attributes.</li> <li>▪ Uses simple tools (scoops, funnels, shovels, buckets).</li> <li>▪ Is aware of self when playing in front of a mirror.</li> <li>▪ Initiates play with another child through gestures, offering toys, smiling, and eye contact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a safe environment for exploring and movement.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, for physical activities (climbing, jumping, dancing, and movement) both alone and with peers.</li> <li>▪ Provide tactile materials for exploration (sand, water, play dough).</li> <li>▪ Provide tools and opportunities for digging, pouring, stacking, and picking up.</li> <li>▪ Rotate toys and provide enough to avoid some conflicts.</li> <li>▪ Offer musical experiences where children move their bodies, including introducing a variety of musical styles, styles of music, slow and active songs, and dance and movement activities.</li> <li>▪ Provide malleable materials (play dough, clay, art materials).</li> </ul>

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Age Range	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p><b>36 to 60 Months</b></p>	<p>Explore materials and actions with an intended purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Matches, sorts, and groups like objects.</li> <li>▪ Uses seriation and simple patterning.</li> <li>▪ Climbs, swings, jumps, dances, and hops to test skills.</li> <li>▪ Aims, throws, catches, and kicks balls to explore projectile management and imitate skills of others.</li> <li>▪ Uses tools, hammers, saws, shovels, and levers to explore the physical properties of moving masses.</li> <li>▪ Plays with wheeled toys (tricycles, scooters, wagons) to explore velocity.</li> <li>▪ Uses art materials to explore attributes of the materials and how the materials can communicate an idea or action.</li> <li>▪ Constructs with and manipulates objects to explore spatial relationships.</li> <li>▪ Creates tests to explore the physical environment (e.g. builds a sand structure with water and sand, pours orange juice in cereal to see how it tastes, or dams up a flowing stream building a rock dam).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide manipulative toys for sorting, classifying, and arranging in groups and sequences, by attribute.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for children to explore and play with materials that promote skills in math and science foundations (e.g. puzzles, tangrams, magnifying glasses, balances, and counting bears).</li> <li>▪ Provide time for outdoor activities and play with digging tools, buckets, wheel toys, and balls.</li> <li>▪ Provide fine motor opportunities during free play times and structure activities based on children’s interests and skills.</li> <li>▪ Add building magazines, blue prints, or pictures to block areas to promote intentional use of materials.</li> <li>▪ Use books or models to engage children in purposeful use of classroom materials.</li> <li>▪ Outdoors, have props nearby, including access to water, for easy access when ideas occur.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>60 Months through Kindergarten</b></p>	<p>Expands knowledge of materials and tools to incorporate into play activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creates elaborate block construction.</li> <li>▪ Uses rules and boundaries in representational building.</li> <li>▪ Experiments with balance, ramps, pulleys, and other tools when block building, constructing, or manipulating objects.</li> <li>▪ Takes apart/deconstructs to gain an understanding (gears, old sewing machine).</li> <li>▪ Works to replicate a building, object, or event through drawing/painting or block building.</li> <li>▪ Climbs, slides, runs, kicks, and jumps to explore movement.</li> <li>▪ Makes up games to test skills.</li> <li>▪ Reinterprets the rules for a game or sport to fit skill levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrich and structure environment (block area with extensive shapes and number of blocks; provide block props and raw materials).</li> <li>▪ Ask clarifying questions to extend play or overcome frustration.</li> <li>▪ Help groups of children negotiate rules and fairness.</li> <li>▪ Provide outdoor play environments for active games, observation, and exploration.</li> <li>▪ Provide increasingly complex opportunities to use tools and explore constructions with a variety of materials (carpentry tools, wood, and nails).</li> </ul>

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Age Range	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p><b>First, Second, and Third Grades</b></p>	<p>Expresses ideas and takes risks to explore materials and ideas independently and in common exploration with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develops plans and models that can be built.</li> <li>▪ Participates in physical activities with others, including organizing and playing games with rules.</li> <li>▪ Creates inventions.</li> <li>▪ Plans and carries out projects, often with peers.</li> <li>▪ Takes responsibility when working with a group.</li> <li>▪ Tests self with practice and training; will practice a specific skill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask questions to further exploration and experimentation.</li> <li>▪ Provide time and space for indoor and outdoor exploration.</li> <li>▪ Protect each child's time to access equipment and materials, and that ample sustained time is available for the child to explore and practice with the equipment or material.</li> <li>▪ Make opportunities for children to engage in rule making and negotiation of "what's fair" in structured, supervised settings so that strategies learned in these settings can be generalized in unstructured settings.</li> <li>▪ Offer role playing and scenario discussions to support each child's access to group play and group explorations.</li> <li>▪ Provide an array of raw materials for constructions, de-constructions, and inventions.</li> </ul>