

IDAHO EARLY LEARNING EGUIDELINES

GOAL 15: CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN PRETEND OR SYMBOLIC PLAY.

Domain 1: Approaches to Learning and Cognitive Development

Sub-Domain: Cognition and Cognitive Processes

[Birth through 8 Months](#)

[6 to 18 Months](#)

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DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT			
SUB-DOMAIN: COGNITION AND COGNITIVE PROCESSES			
REPRESENTATIONAL THOUGHT AND PLAY			
GOAL 15: CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN PRETEND OR SYMBOLIC PLAY.			
Age Range	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Birth through 8 Months	Sustains brief playful interactions with caregiver support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinates body and visual cues with caregiver. ▪ When stimulated, gazes at, away from, and back to caregiver in a reciprocal manner. ▪ Initiates interaction with adult using eye gaze, smiling, or verbalizations. ▪ Responds with interest to Peek-a-Boo and hand clapping. ▪ Plays with sounds while exploring a toy. ▪ Smiles, coos, and relaxes muscles in reciprocal play with caregiver. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage baby in playful interactions (smiles, face-making, stroking), and respond to child's cues of stimulation and over-stimulation. ▪ Watch for child's signals of looking to engage in interactions. ▪ During care giving tasks, bring baby close and talk softly (feeding, diapering, face washing). ▪ Provide baby opportunities to see objects and people when interested and alert. ▪ Sing songs, say rhymes, look out the window, and show picture books while baby is alert and interested.

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<p>6 to 18 Months</p>	<p>Use senses and mobility to explore functions of objects and actions, with symbolic play evolving as a result of the functional exploration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uses objects functionally. ▪ Uses objects symbolically. ▪ Uses simple abstraction (a stick for a spoon, a tissue for a blanket). ▪ Makes animal sounds when prompted. ▪ Uses make-believe play to represent typical situations and functions from the child's daily life (e.g. rocking or feeding a baby doll). ▪ Imitates adults and older children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell child stories about daily events or something special that happened, with the child as the central character. ▪ Expose child to make-believe stories and songs from a variety of cultures. ▪ Demonstrate and engage child in making a variety of animal sounds, matched with pictures of animals or when present, real animals. ▪ Recognize child's cues to engage in play. ▪ Help coordinate child's initiations with other children (e.g. child tries to "feed" another child, or child puts hat on other child). ▪ Respond to children's looks or sounds for engaging with another. ▪ Provide props and opportunities for imaginative play.

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16 to 38 Months	Use objects symbolically in pretend play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uses one object as a symbol for another (holds blocks to ear to represent a cell phone). ▪ Explores experiences by taking on family roles from within the family (declares "I'm the mommy!" and puts on a parent's shoes). ▪ Moves from mostly solitary play to some parallel play. ▪ Uses props in pretend play (dolls, animals, trucks, objects). ▪ May have imaginary friends. ▪ Reacts to people in costume as if they are the characters they portray. ▪ Reacts to puppets as if they are real and not extensions of an adult or another child. ▪ Sometimes uses play to address fears and to take risks. ▪ Initiates play with another child through gestures, offering a toy, smiling, and eye contact. ▪ Uses theme play when presented with props or prompts (animals go to the barn; babies are fed and put to bed). ▪ Initiates favorite play themes with peer or adult. ▪ Assigns emotions and language to dolls and other play characters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in child's sense of imagination by engaging in make-believe play, with child leading. ▪ Dispel child's fears that result from confusion over fantasy and reality. ▪ Discuss child's dreams, ideas, and imagination with him/her. ▪ When a child has imaginary friends, acknowledge the "friend." ▪ Scaffold child's inclusion of peers into dramatic play scenarios; though do not expect children to play with common goals. Parallel playing is the norm. ▪ Read fiction and nonfiction books and share family and traditional oral stories with child, and discuss how they are different. ▪ Provide ample time and creation of imaginative play themes. ▪ Provide props for creating play themes. ▪ Acknowledge and respect a child's play with props for the sake of playing with the object (e.g. the child repeatedly opens and closes a cash register rather than playing store). Resist trying to turn the play into a theme. Wait for the child's waning interest to suggest a theme or add an element of a theme to the play.

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36 to 60 Months	Develops plots, scripts, and takes on roles, with a mixture of reality and fantasy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Takes on pretend roles and situations. Uses appropriate language, tone, and movements (e.g. pretends to be a baby, meows and purrs pretending to be a kitty, or has a “fire” on the stove playing in housekeeping). ▪ Often plays independently exploring nuances of roles and characters without regard to cooperation from others. ▪ Uses primarily solitary, parallel, or associative play styles, with cooperative play sometimes occurring. ▪ Explores experience by taking on familiar roles in the home and community (firefighters, restaurant, doctor’s office). ▪ Engages in complex make-believe play with others, uses theme-oriented play that involves multiple characters and settings). ▪ Makes connections between characters in books, stories, or movies, with people in real-life. ▪ Questions if characters in books, family, and traditional oral stories and movies are real or not. ▪ Believes objects, events, and characters can be “magic” or have “powers.” ▪ May need help with conflict that arises when child does not take on roles or play within the expectations of another child. ▪ Uses dramatic play to recreate a real situation with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage the child in activities and interactions that develop fantasy characters while helping them differentiate between make-believe and reality. ▪ Help child distinguish between cartoons, puppets, characters in books and movies, and real people. ▪ Provide environment and time for sustained dramatic play. ▪ In child care, respect and protect each child’s right to dramatic play. Assure that children who are taking on big, very active physical role playing, do not interfere in the space where children are carrying out less physically active role playing. ▪ Provide props that can be adapted to various themes (e.g. hospital, firefighters, restaurant, airport, cooking). ▪ Scaffold entrance into dramatic play for child who needs support to join play. ▪ Clarify scripts and roles as part of conflict resolution. ▪ Provide opportunities for pretend play outdoors with materials such as sand, water, buckets and pans, fabric for tents, play scripts, balls, and opportunities to invent games. ▪ Keep books and writing materials that support dramatic play and literacy nearby pretend play areas. ▪ Know the difference between styles of play, and provide protection for those children who are not yet proficient in playing cooperatively for a common goal. ▪ In child care or groups, expect children to have some success in taking turns in playing roles and with equipment

		<p>self involvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plays out social and emotional issues (power, loss, fears). ▪ Uses block and dramatic play areas for imaginative settings and extended play. ▪ Extends and consolidates understanding through play. 	<p>and props. Independently exploring equipment and roles gives children a chance to learn the characteristics of the equipment and roles before they are expected to play cooperatively. Protect that solitary play.</p>
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<p>60 Months through Kindergarten</p>	<p>Uses and negotiates scripts for elaborate fantasy play, usually distinguishing fantasy from reality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explains if a story is real or make-believe, when prompted. ▪ Understands and expresses when fantasy is influencing actions (e.g. "I was just pretending that I am a monster."). ▪ Describes characters, places, and objects in books, movies, and television shows. ▪ Engages in games with rules, though may not follow the rules precisely. ▪ Uses representational block play to create and recreate experiences. ▪ Uses block building for both real and pretend scenarios and describes the difference. ▪ Expresses ideas through dramatic play and character development. ▪ May have favorite and recurring play themes and props. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer props and materials to encourage and support pretend play. ▪ Ask clarifying questions to extend play or help a child overcome frustration. ▪ Help groups of children negotiate rules and fairness. Write and post the rules when appropriate. ▪ Provide outdoor play environments for active games, observation, and exploration with props nearby and easily accessible. ▪ Provide a variety of open-ended props for children to choose as they develop play themes (e.g. large blocks, clothing, writing utensils, art and music tools, wheel toys, signs, platforms). ▪ When a child's ideas for creating play exceed their ability to create the play, offer questions and comments that help break the play down into workable chunks (e.g. "A full castle with turrets and water features is not likely, but what parts of that can you create?").

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First, Second, and Third Grades	Creates and carries out elaborate fantasy and real play themes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engages in games with formalized rules; sometimes based on shared current culture characters or movies. ▪ Formalizes plots and actions into presentations as plays, video productions, or puppet shows. ▪ Uses logical thinking and explanations about what is fictional in stories and games. ▪ Directs others in carrying out plots and roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help child articulate and develop rules for games/play. ▪ Encourage peer groups to develop shared plans for creating play and developing presentations. ▪ Help children learn strategies and skills for documenting their ideas, plays, and stories using art and digital presentation tools. ▪ Offer opportunities for discussions about fantasy and reality in stories, movies, and daily topics. ▪ Use a variety of questions to guide discussions including who, what, where, when, why, and how. ▪ Help child distinguish fantasy and reality in media, especially around commercials and advertising.