



Weaving Milestones into Child Care Routines: A Guide for Nurturing Growth

Child care centers play a crucial role in supporting the development of infants and toddlers. A well-structured daily schedule that incorporates age-appropriate activities and opportunities for exploration can significantly contribute to their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth. This article explores how to seamlessly integrate infant and toddler milestones into a child care routine, fostering a nurturing and stimulating environment.

Understanding Developmental Milestones:

Before crafting a schedule, it's essential to understand the developmental milestones typical for infants and toddlers. These milestones serve as a roadmap, guiding educators in providing age-appropriate activities and experiences.

Infants

- **Physical:** Rolling over, sitting up, crawling, standing, taking first steps.
- **Cognitive:** Developing object permanence, exploring with their mouths, responding to sounds, babbling.
- **Social-Emotional:** Smiling, laughing, showing affection, recognizing familiar faces.

Toddlers

- **Physical:** Walking independently, running, climbing, jumping.
- **Cognitive:** Understanding simple words, pointing to objects, starting to use single words.
- **Social-Emotional:** Playing alongside other children, showing independence, expressing emotions.

Integrating Milestones into the Child care Schedule:

1. Morning Arrival

- **Infants:** Provide a calm and comforting environment. Offer a warm greeting, sing a song, or engage in gentle play.
- Infant *CLASS* Dimension(s) - RC
- **Toddlers:** Encourage independent activities like choosing a toy. Engage in conversation about their day or their favorite things.
- Toddler *CLASS* Dimension(s) - PC and LM

2. Free Play

- **Infants:** Provide a safe and stimulating environment with various textures, shapes, and colors. Offer tummy time, sensory play, and age-appropriate toys.
- Infant *CLASS* Dimension(s) - FE
- **Toddlers:** Offer a variety of toys and activities that encourage exploration, creativity, and problem-solving. Provide opportunities for social interaction and imaginative play.
- Toddler *CLASS* Dimension(s) - RCP and FLD

3. Mealtimes

- **Infants:** Offer a calm and structured feeding environment. Introduce new foods gradually and allow infant-led exploration of new textures and flavors.
- Infant *CLASS* Dimension(s) - FE
- **Toddlers:** Encourage self-feeding with age-appropriate utensils. Provide a variety of healthy foods and involve toddlers in meal preparation.
- Toddler *CLASS* Dimension(s) - RCP and FLD

4. Outdoor Play

- **Infants:** Provide a safe and shaded area for outdoor exploration. Offer opportunities for crawling, rolling, and sensory experiences.
- Infant *CLASS* Dimension(s) - FE
- **Toddlers:** Encourage gross motor skills development through activities like running, jumping, climbing, and playing with balls.
- Toddler *CLASS* Dimension(s) - FLD

5. Quiet Time

- **Infants:** Provide a quiet and calming environment for naps or rest as needed. Offer soothing music or white noise.
- Infant *CLASS* Dimension(s) - TS and FE
- **Toddlers:** Encourage quiet activities like reading books, listening to stories, or engaging in quiet play.
- Toddler *CLASS* Dimension(s) - RCP and FLD

6. Transition Times

- **Infants:** Provide clear and predictable transitions. Use calming language and gentle touch.
- Infant *CLASS* Dimension(s) - RC
- **Toddlers:** Offer warnings and choices to help toddlers prepare for transitions. Use visual aids like timers or picture schedules.
- Toddler *CLASS* Dimension(s) - BG and FLD

7. Individualized Attention

- **Infants:** Provide one-on-one attention and interaction. Respond to their cues and provide comfort and reassurance.
- Infant *CLASS* Dimension(s) - RC and TS

- **Toddlers:** Encourage independent play but also provide opportunities for individual attention and interaction. Engage in conversations and listen to their ideas.
- Toddler *CLASS* Dimension(s) - TS, RCP and FLD

8. Documentation and Communication

- **Infants:** Keep detailed records of their development and progress. Communicate regularly with parents about their child's milestones and any concerns.
- Infant *CLASS* Dimension(s) - TS
- **Toddlers:** Document their progress and any challenges. Communicate with parents about their child's development and any areas where they might need additional support.
- Toddler *CLASS* Dimension(s) - TS

Integrating infant and toddler milestones into a child care schedule is crucial for their overall development. By providing a nurturing and stimulating environment, educators can support their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth. A well-structured schedule that incorporates age-appropriate activities, opportunities for exploration, and individualized attention will help these infants and toddlers thrive and reach their full potential.

[Virginia's Early Learning & Development Standards](#) has additional information about approaches to play and learning, social and emotional development, communication, language, literacy development, health and physical development, and cognitive development.

CLASS Dimensions

Infant: Relational Climate (RC), Teacher Sensitivity (TS), and Facilitated Exploration (FE)

Toddler: Positive Climate (PC), Teacher Sensitivity (TS), Regard for Child Perspectives (RCP), Behavior Guidance (BG), Facilitation of Learning and Development (FLD), and Language Modeling (LM)

References

[American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#)

[National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#)

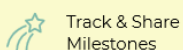
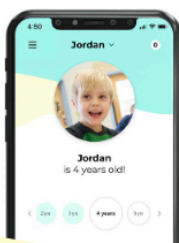
[Zero to Three](#)

Resource Spotlight

Help your child grow and thrive

Your child's early years are so very important. Tracking how your little one plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves helps you support their development.

Download CDC's free *Milestone Tracker* app to find fun and easy activities for each age.



Track & Share
Milestones



Get Tips &
Activities



Learn When
to Act Early

Learn more at cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker



Milestones matter! Track your child's milestones from age 2 months on with CDC's easy-to-use illustrated checklists; get tips from CDC for encouraging your child's development; and find out what to do if you are ever concerned about how your child is developing. Please click [here](#) to view.

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities



Enhancing Emergent Literacy for Infants and Toddlers

1-2-3 READ! early literacy training is an interactive, practical training designed for teachers, caregivers, and directors who work with infants and toddlers, birth to 36 months, in a group setting.

September 21st - Chilhowie
October 19th - Newport News

Registration fee waived for VQB5 participants
Non-VQB5 participant is \$25.00
(Includes all training and materials)

The training is from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Click [here](#) to register online now!



V A H S A 2024 17th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 22nd - October 24th

Building Bridges: Head Start's Two-Generation Approach to Family Empowerment: This theme emphasizes Head Start's holistic approach, which focuses on supporting both children and their families. The metaphor of "building bridges" suggests a connection and collaboration between different aspects of the program, including education, health, and social services, to empower families. "Two-Generation Approach to Family Empowerment" highlights the unique strategy of Head Start in addressing the needs of both children and parents simultaneously, ultimately aiming for the development and success of the entire family unit.

A 2.5 day institute at the Hotel Madison in Harrisonburg, VA providing the following learning formats:

- Keynote presentations
- Professional development workshops
- Round-table discussion sessions
- Exhibitor fair
- Social networking

Click [here](#) to register online now!



Did you know...?

The VA ITSN assists child care providers with earning their Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential or Infant Toddler Career Studies Certificate. Additionally, there are opportunities for scholarships like the [Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program](#) and [Project Pathfinders](#) to support your educational journey.

Please click [here](#) to view our Back to School Brochure for more information on this amazing opportunity.

Did you know...?

VQB5 Registration is Open!



All publicly-funded programs that serve children ages birth to five are required by state law to participate in VQB5 (Virginia's Unified Measurement and Improvement System) and must complete registration in the [LinkB5](#) data portal between August 15 - October 1.

- View: [VQB5 Participation Requirement Resources](#)
- Contact your [Ready Region](#) for VQB5 registration support and CLASS training.
- Questions? Email vqb5@doe.virginia.gov

On August 13, VDOE hosted an introductory webinar about VQB5 for new program leaders. This webinar covered information about VQB5 required activities and addressed frequently asked questions.

View Recording: [Introduction to VQB5 for New Program Leaders](#) (1 hr).



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