

# Moving Beyond the Developmental Continuum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos: Teaching Strategies GOLD™

Introducing the Objectives  
for Development & Learning

# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
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## ROUTINES

Hellos and Good-Byes	
Responding to What Children Need.....	4
Diapering and Toileting	
Responding to What Children Need.....	8
Eating and Mealtimes	
Responding to What Children Need.....	13
Sleeping and Nap Time	
Responding to What Children Need.....	17
Getting Dressed	
Responding to What Children Need.....	21

## EXPERIENCES

Playing With Toys	
Responding to and Planning for Each Child.....	24
Imitating and Pretending	
Responding to and Planning for Each Child.....	27
Enjoying Stories and Books	
Responding to and Planning for Each Child.....	29
Connecting With Music and Movement	
Responding to and Planning for Each Child.....	31
Creating With Art	
Responding to and Planning for Each Child.....	33
Tasting and Preparing Food	
Responding to and Planning for Each Child.....	35
Exploring Sand and Water	
Responding to and Planning for Each Child.....	37
Going Outdoors	
Responding to and Planning for Each Child.....	39

# Introduction

Educators who are familiar with *The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos* may recall *The Creative Curriculum® Developmental Continuum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos*. The *Developmental Continuum* helps teachers thoughtfully observe children, and then use what they learn to be responsive to children's interests and needs.

The *Teaching Strategies GOLD™* assessment system accomplishes those tasks and others in a new way. It uses **development and learning progressions**, which include indicators and examples of widely held expectations for each age group from birth through kindergarten. **Color bands** (a different color for each year of life) are used to indicate the age ranges for the standard developmental and learning expectations.

Where the *Developmental Continuum* was made up of goals and objectives, *Teaching Strategies GOLD™* identifies **objectives for development and learning**—the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that have been identified in the latest research as being the most predictive of school success. Many of these objectives include dimensions.

*Moving Beyond the Developmental Continuum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos: Teaching Strategies GOLD™* shows how to **connect children's actions and behaviors with selected objectives for development and learning**, and offers suggestions for responding to each child based on direct observation and reflection.

This resource is divided into two sections that correspond to Part 2 (Routines) and Part 3 (Experiences) of *The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos*.

**“Routines”** shows how daily routines are an important part of the curriculum. See “Responding to What Children Need” within “Routines” to see how the new objectives for development and learning can be used to plan five daily routines that respond to children's changing needs and emerging independence.

**“Experiences”** describes how various kinds of experiences support children's development and learning, suggests appropriate materials for each age group, and explains how you can support children's learning by thoughtfully observing and responding to each child. See “Responding to and Planning for Each Child” within “Experiences” to see how the new objectives for development and learning can help teachers plan meaningful experiences that respond to children's interests and abilities.

# Routines

## Hellos and Good-Byes

*Matthew (22 months) begins to cry when his mother says good-bye and reassures him that she will return. Mercedes kneels, puts her arm around Matthew, and says, “You are sad because your mommy left.” She pauses and gently pats his back. “It’s hard to say good-bye. Mommy will be at work, thinking about you. She will be back later. Let’s look at our family picture album together.” When Mercedes shows the page with photographs of Matthew’s family, he smiles and points to his parents, saying, “Mama, Daddy.” Mercedes responds, “Yes, that’s Matthew’s mama, and there’s his daddy. They know that you will be here with me until they come to take you home.”*

Every day begins as families and children say hello to you and good-bye to one another. Every day ends as children reunite with their families and say good-bye to you. Children, their families, and you all experience strong feelings during these times. These times of the day deserve your attention.

Arrivals set the tone for day. A painful farewell is sometimes harder on parents than on children, who often recover quickly once they feel secure in your care. Parents often feel anxious and guilty when their children are crying as they leave. Because every child is different, you have to be flexible and responsive to what each child and family needs from you.

Reunions at the end of the day can be just as emotional for children and families. A child who said good-bye easily or who adjusted well after a painful good-bye may greet her father joyfully or ignore him. She also might have a temper tantrum or begin to cry because she saved her strong feelings for her family, the people she trusts most. The happy response delights her father, but the others might make him feel rejected, sad, or guilty. Departures need your attention as much as arrivals.

Learning to separate is a lifelong process and an important part of growing up. When you help children learn to manage separations from and reunions with their loved ones, they feel understood and gain self-confidence.

## Responding to What Children Need

Infants, toddlers, and twos behave differently during hellos and good-byes, depending on their developmental level, temperament, what is happening at home, their physical health, or even the weather.

## Young Infants

Young infants who come to your program before they are 6 months old may not have difficulty separating from a family member. During these early months, most babies adjust well to new situations and teachers if their needs are met promptly and consistently. If your care is loving and responsive, very young infants are unlikely to have difficulty during good-byes.

<p><i>Julio's father is rushed today. He hands Julio (4 months) to Linda quickly, puts the clothes he brought from home on the shelf, kisses Julio's head, and says good-bye. Julio begins to cry, and Linda feels his muscles tense.</i></p>	
<p><b>Linda's Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Julio is feeling uncomfortable because his morning routine has been rushed. He is learning to communicate his feelings.</p> <p>I wonder if he is reacting to his father's mood.</p> <p>How can I comfort him?</p>
<p><b>How Linda Responds</b></p>	<p>"My pequeño bebé," Linda says as she rubs Julio's back. His crying calms to a whimper. His body begins to relax.</p> <p>Linda gets Julio's favorite stuffed animal. "Would you like your soft perrito?"</p> <p>Julio reaches for the stuffed dog, holds it, and snuggles up to Linda.</p>
<p><b>What Julio Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To recognize and reach out to familiar adults (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, a. Forms relationships with adults</i>)</p> <p>To express a variety of emotions and needs, using facial expressions, body movements, and vocalizations (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, a. Manages feelings</i>)</p> <p>To use his whole hand to grasp objects (<i>Objective 7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength, a. Uses fingers and hands</i>)</p>

## Mobile Infants

Mobile infants typically show more of a preference than young infants to be with family members and special adults. Around the age of 8–12 months, children often develop anxiety about being separated from the special adults with whom they have bonded. While helping a child through difficult separations may be challenging for both you and the child, remember that the difficulty is a sign that the child has a secure, healthy attachment with his parents. Your job is to build a trusting relationship with him so that he can develop a secure attachment with you as well.

*Willard (11 months) returns to child care after a family vacation. Grace greets him warmly, but he clings to his mother. Grace suggests that she stay for a little while. When Grace joins them, Willard looks at his mother, puts his hands on her leg, and looks at Grace. Grace smiles and says, “Hi, Willard. I see that you are looking at me.” Willard smiles slightly and turns, burying his face in his mother’s arm. When Willard looks at Grace again, he is smiling. Grace says, “Oh, Willard, I missed your smile. I’m so glad you are back!” Willard reaches out and puts his hand on Grace’s hand. She gives it noisy kisses. Willard squeals with laughter. His mother gets up to leave. Willard grabs her legs and screams. His mother says, “I’m sorry, Willard, but I have to leave.”*

<p><b>Grace’s Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Willard has not seen me for a couple of weeks. He wants to stay with his mother, but I know his mother has to leave.</p> <p>How can I comfort him and help him feel safe with me again?</p>
<p><b>How Grace Responds</b></p>	<p>Grace gently helps Willard let go of his mother’s legs and lifts him into her arms. “It is very hard to say good-bye to Mommy. You are sad to see her go.” Willard continues to cry loudly, and he screams as she leaves.</p> <p>Grace rubs his back and continues to talk to him in a soothing voice. “Oh, you love your mommy very much.” She walks around with Willard, gently rocking him in her arms. Willard continues to cry and buries his face in Grace’s shoulder. Grace gently strokes his head and says, “I’m so glad that I’m getting to hold you right now.”</p>
<p><b>What Willard Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To find security in being with familiar people (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, a. Forms relationships with adults</i>)</p> <p>To use others’ facial expressions, gestures, or voices to guide his feelings (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, b. Responds to emotional cues</i>)</p>

## Toddlers and Twos

Toddlers and twos may cheerfully wave good-bye to their families on some days. On other days, they may cling so tightly to their parents that you have to pull them off gently so that their parents can leave. The same clingy child may ignore a family member who comes to pick her up. If you have established a nurturing relationship with children and if they have a consistent routine, then, even on the most challenging days, children will know that they can trust you to ease them through difficult times.

*When his father arrives, Matthew (22 months) is playing happily on the slide. Matthew ignores him and continues playing. Mercedes talks to Matthew's dad about how Matthew has become skilled at going up and down all by himself. Mercedes then walks over to Matthew and says, "Matthew, it is time to go home with your daddy." Matthew shakes his head and says, "No."*

<p><b>Mercedes' Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>I don't want Matthew's father to feel bad because Matthew is acting as though he doesn't want to leave. I should explain how hard transitions are. Children need our help to switch from one activity to another.</p> <p>What can I say to help Matthew transition to going home?</p>
<p><b>How Mercedes Responds</b></p>	<p>Mercedes says, "Matthew, you're having fun on that slide." Matthew smiles and says, "Slide down." Mercedes explains, "You may go up and down the slide two more times. Then it is time to go home." Matthew goes up and down the slide. Mercedes cheers and says, "One." When he heads up the stairs again, Mercedes says, "Last time, Matthew. Make it a good one!" After Matthew slides down, Mercedes scoops him up and kisses him on the cheek. As they walk to the gate, Mercedes explains to his father the challenge of toddler transitions.</p>
<p><b>What Matthew Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To follow simple directions and sometimes test limits (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, b. Follows limits and expectations</i>)</p> <p>To balance while moving arms and legs in active play (<i>Objective 5. Demonstrates balancing skills</i>)</p> <p>To understand simple directions and explanations (<i>Objective 8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language, b. Follows directions</i>)</p> <p>To speak in two-word phrases (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, c. Uses conventional grammar</i>)</p>

## Diapering and Toileting

*Grace explains, “I’m going to change that wet diaper,” before gently picking up Willard (11 months). As she places him on the changing table, she invites conversation by saying, “You are wearing bright blue pants today. Did your Daddy put them on you this morning?” Willard says, “Dada.” Grace continues, “We’re going to put those bright blue pants right back on as soon as we’re finished, okay?” As Grace pulls off Willard’s pants, he touches his tummy. “That’s your tummy,” she explains. “Are you giving your tummy a little pat?”*

If a child’s diaper is changed six times a day until he is 30 months old, he will have had his diaper changed more than 5,400 times. Anything a child experiences 5,400 times is an important part of life for him and for those who create the experience.

Diapering offers a chance to focus all of your attention on a single child. You can talk with each other, sing, or play a game of “Where are your toes?” When you approach diapering as an opportunity for meaningful interactions rather than a task to hurry through, you teach children important lessons: that bodily functions are a normal, healthy part of everyday life and that interactions with others are rewarding.

Between 2 and 3 years of age, children typically become physically, cognitively, and emotionally ready to begin using the toilet. If you and the child’s family follow the child’s lead, are supportive, work together, and avoid power struggles, you can help make mastering the skill of using the toilet a pleasant learning experience. Their child will also develop the self-confidence that comes with gaining self-control.

Adapt the area as necessary for toddlers and twos with disabilities. Many different types of potty seats are designed to meet the needs of children with various disabilities. Families and therapists can advise you about appropriate equipment. If a child uses a wheelchair or walker, be sure to allow enough space in the bathroom. You will also need handrails to make it easy to transfer between the wheelchair and toilet.

Schedule regular times to check children’s diapers and change diapers between times as needed. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association recommend that diapers be checked at least hourly for wetness and feces.<sup>29</sup> Following a schedule will enable you to guide other children to activities that do not require your active participation, so you can pay attention to the child whose diaper you are changing.

Have everything you need nearby before you start diapering. This way, you can focus on the child, and you will not have to ask a busy colleague to assist you.

## Responding to What Children Need

Depending on their developmental levels and personal characteristics, infants, toddlers, and twos react to diapering and toileting very differently. Your responses will change according to what a child needs from you.

*Linda smiles at Julio (4 months) and sings to him while she is changing his diaper. He gazes into her eyes and relaxes.*

## Young Infants

Young infants interact with you individually during diapering. They also begin exploring and learning about their bodies and things around them. They vocalize back and forth, pausing to listen as you converse together.

*Julio (4 months) has been lying on a blanket, smiling at Linda, waving his arms, and kicking his legs. He begins to grimace, whimper, and squirm. Linda smells an odor. "You have a poopy diaper, Julio," she explains. "Let's get you changed right away!" Linda picks him up, takes him to the diaper table, and lays him down. Julio looks at Linda as she chats with him. "Look, you're all clean," she says as she puts on a fresh diaper. She continues talking to him as she gets him dressed and washes his hands.*

<p><b>Linda's Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Julio's way of letting me know that he has a wet diaper is to make faces, whimper, and squirm. I think he needed to be changed around this time yesterday. Perhaps he needs a diaper change at the same time every day.</p>
<p><b>How Linda Responds</b></p>	<p>Linda changes Julio's diaper as soon as she notices his cues. She talks to Julio, explaining what she is doing. "First we have to take the messy diaper off, and then I will clean your bottom. All clean!" she says, looking back at him as he looks at her. "Time for the dry diaper." After the diaper is on, she washes Julio's hands, smiles, and says, "All done!" Julio smiles back.</p>
<p><b>What Julio Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To recognize and reach out to familiar adults (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, a. Forms relationships with adults</i>)</p> <p>To develop a routine pattern for when he needs his diaper changed (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, c. Takes care of own needs appropriately</i>)</p> <p>To show interest in the speech of others (<i>Objective 8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language, a. Comprehends language</i>)</p> <p>To use facial expressions, vocalizations, and body movements to communicate (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary</i>)</p>

## Mobile Infants

Mobile infants participate increasingly in the diapering routine. They lift their legs so you can take off the diaper, hold their hands out to be washed, tug on wet pants, and bring you a clean diaper. They begin to learn new words, such as the names of body parts and clothes, and concepts such as up–down, wet–dry, open–close, and cool–warm.

*Brooks lifts Abby (14 months) onto the changing table, explaining, “It’s time to change your wet diaper, Abby.” As soon as Brooks lays her down, Abby quickly rolls over and begins to crawl. Brooks keeps her hand on Abby’s back and acknowledges, “Abby, you want to move.”*

<p><b>Brooks’ Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Abby really enjoys practicing her motor skills. She wants to move, not lie still, but she needs to have her very wet diaper changed.</p> <p>I wonder how to engage her in this routine. How can I acknowledge her desire to move and still change her diaper?</p>
<p><b>How Brooks Responds</b></p>	<p>Brooks tells Abby, “I know you want to get down. As soon as I change your diaper, you may get down.” “Dow,” repeats Abby, recognizing the familiar word. Brooks continues, “Yes, up and down. Abby, now it is time to roll over so that we can change your diaper.” She helps Abby roll onto her back and begins to change her diaper, talking to her throughout the process. Abby reaches in the direction of the stack of diapers. “Thank you, Abby. You do need a clean diaper. Will you please hold it for me?” She hands the diaper to Abby.</p>
<p><b>What Abby Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To begin to be receptive to verbal redirection (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, b. Follows limits and expectations</i>)</p> <p>To begin to move from place to place (<i>Objective 4. Demonstrates traveling skills</i>)</p> <p>To understand simple multiword speech in familiar contexts (<i>Objective 8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language, a. Comprehends language</i>)</p> <p>To use word-like sounds to communicate (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, b. Speaks clearly</i>)</p>

## Toddlers

At this stage of development, children are becoming very interested in their bodies and bodily functions. They are able to participate more actively in diapering. They can get their own diapers from their cubbies, pull down their own pants, and often try to take off their wet diapers.

<p><i>Matthew (22 months) looks at Mercedes, points to his diaper, and says, “Wet.” Mercedes reaches for Matthew’s hand and says, “Thank you for telling me that you are wet, Matthew. Let’s go change your diaper.” Matthew shakes his head, clenches his hands into fists, frowns, and insists, “No! Me do!”</i></p>	
<p><b>Mercedes’ Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Lately Matthew has been letting me know when he is wet. However, this is the second time that he has protested when I’ve thanked him and then tried to change his diaper. He wants to be more involved in the diaper-changing process.</p> <p>How can I give Matthew the opportunity to participate in diaper changing but still follow all of the diapering steps needed to maintain a safe and healthy environment?</p>
<p><b>How Mercedes Responds</b></p>	<p>“Matthew, would you like to help me change your diaper?” Matthew nods his head up and down. As Mercedes points to the cubby where his diapers are kept, she asks, “Will you please get a clean diaper for us to use?” Matthew gets a diaper and hands it to her. “Thank you, Matthew. Will you please take your shorts off now?” Matthew pulls at his shorts. It takes him a few tries, but, with some help, he is able to pull them down and step out of them. He smiles at Mercedes and exclaims, “Did it!”</p> <p>As she helps him walk up the steps to the changing table, Mercedes acknowledges, “You took your pants off all by yourself! Okay, let’s change that diaper.”</p>
<p><b>What Matthew Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To follow simple directions (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, b. Follows limits and expectations</i>)</p> <p>To try more complex personal care tasks with increasing success (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, c. Takes care of own needs appropriately</i>)</p> <p>To demonstrate understanding of simple directions and questions (<i>Objective 8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language, b. Follows directions</i>)</p> <p>To speak in two-word phrases (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, c. Uses conventional grammar</i>).</p>

## Twos

Twos are about to accomplish a special task—toilet learning—and you have an important role to play. Here are some of the ways that children show that they are becoming more aware of their bodily functions and that they will soon be ready for toilet learning:

- staying dry for long periods of time
- wanting to sit on the toilet with their clothes on
- telling you that they are wet, had a bowel movement, or are going to (although usually too late to get them to the bathroom in time)
- saying that they want to use the toilet and talking about their urine and bowel movements, using whatever words are used at home

To help a child learn to use the toilet, follow these steps:

- Watch for the signs that children are ready. Remember that 2-year-olds do not automatically become ready for toilet learning on their second birthday. While some twos show signs of readiness, many children are not ready to undertake this big step until they are at least 30 months old.
- When they seem ready, encourage children to use the toilet. Talk with them consistently and calmly, but without undue pressure or shaming them.
- Frequently remind children to go to the toilet. That way, they might not get so involved in what they are doing that they forget and have an accident. Take advantage of group potty time so children can see and learn from one another.
- Acknowledge children’s successes.
- Allow children to see their urine and bowel movements and invite them to help flush them away if they choose.

Expect twos to have toileting accidents as they learn to control when and where they go to the bathroom. If you treat their toileting accidents matter-of-factly, children will develop positive attitudes about using the toilet.

*Gena (30 months) is busy building a farm for a new set of animals that Ivan put out this morning. All of a sudden she begins to cry. Ivan walks over and asks “Gena, what happened? I saw you playing with the new animals, and now you’re crying.” Gena points to her wet pants. “I forgot,” she says. Ivan responds, “That’s okay. Accidents happen. Let’s get you into some dry clothes so you can be comfortable. Then you can finish your farm.”*

<p><b>Ivan’s Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Gena is beginning to understand that she is expected to use the toilet, and she feels embarrassed when something goes wrong.</p> <p>She sometimes gets so involved in her play that she forgets to use the bathroom.</p> <p>How can I help her remember to go to the bathroom, even while she’s absorbed in play?</p>
<p><b>How Ivan Responds</b></p>	<p>Ivan helps Gena change into dry clothes and seals her wet ones in a plastic bag for her family to take home and wash.</p> <p>Later in the day, Ivan talks with Gena. He suggests that he help her use the toilet each day after snacks, so she can play without worrying. Gena agrees to the plan.</p>
<p><b>What Gena Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To understand what behavior is expected, with increasing regularity (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, b. Follows limits and expectations</i>)</p> <p>To continue an activity, despite distractions (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, a. Attends and engages</i>)</p> <p>To understand increasingly complex and abstract spoken language (<i>Objective 8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language a. Comprehends language</i>)</p>

# Eating and Mealtimes

*Valisha (33 months) has just finished washing her hands. LaToya, who is getting ready for lunch, says, “Valisha, I need some help. Will you please carry these spoons to the table? We need them to eat our lunch.” Valisha takes four spoons from LaToya, places one on each placemat, and exclaims, “I did it!” “Thank you,” responds LaToya. “What else do we need?” “Napkins,” answers Valisha, getting them from the lunch cart. She sits on one of the chairs and distributes the napkins, admitting, “I’m tired.” LaToya smiles. “You’ve been a big help, Valisha. Today we’re having one of your favorite lunches: rice and beans.” Valisha responds, “Yea! Mommy makes that.”*

Mealtimes and related activities, such as setting the table, washing hands, talking with others at the table, and brushing teeth, are all learning opportunities. During these activities, you interact with children and help them get to know one another. Through your involvement, they also develop good nutrition and health habits. During mealtimes, infants, toddlers, and twos explore the tastes, colors, textures, and aromas of foods and enjoy a sense of caring and community.

When Linda cradles Julio (4 months) in her arms to give him his bottle, she gives him the message, “You can trust me to take good care of you.” When Brooks puts a spoon and a dish of mashed sweet potato on (14-month-old) Abby’s plate, her actions say, “Go ahead. Here’s a chance to practice feeding yourself.” LaToya teaches concepts and social skills when she talks with children about the fact that the green beans are the same color as the play dough they made, reminds them to use the chairs for sitting, and helps them brush their teeth. She also supports their development of healthy habits.

## Responding to What Children Need

Babies’ mouth patterns and hand and body skills affect the kinds of foods they are able to eat, as well as how they should be fed. Here is general information about what infants, toddlers, and twos are able to do, the kinds of food they can eat, and how to feed them.

## Young Infants

Babies are born with nursing reflexes. A baby turns his head toward an object, such as a nipple, when his mouth, lip, cheek, or chin is touched. When a baby’s lips are touched, his tongue moves out of his mouth. This reflex allows feeding from the breast or bottle but not from a spoon or cup. Feeding solid foods is not recommended until a baby is 4–6 months old.

Between about 4 and 7 months of age, babies develop new skills that enable them to eat semisolid foods, such as infant cereal with iron and strained vegetables and fruit. They open their mouths when they see food. They can now move their tongues up and down, and swallow many foods without choking. They can sit with support, have good head control, and use their whole hands to grasp objects. Infants who are eating soft or solid foods but who are not yet able to sit alone should sit in your lap while you feed them. Place the food on a nearby table or counter.

*Janet feeds Jasmine (8 months) some applesauce while sitting at a child-size table. As Jasmine opens her mouth, Janet uses the spoon to direct applesauce into it. Janet comments, “I know you like applesauce, Jasmine, because you always finish the bowlful.” As Janet feeds her, Jasmine dips her right hand into the bowl, looks up at Janet, and pops her hand into her mouth. Most of the applesauce falls out of Jasmine’s hand before it reaches her mouth.*

<p><b>Janet’s Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Jasmine really wants to feed herself, although she does not always get the food into her mouth. It would be so much easier for me to feed her, but I know that it’s important to encourage her desire to feed herself and to support her developing self-feeding skills. If I let Jasmine feed herself, will she get enough to eat?</p>
<p><b>How Janet Responds</b></p>	<p>As Janet wipes up the spilled applesauce, she comments, “It’s great that you’re feeding yourself, Jasmine. Applesauce is very slippery.”</p> <p>“Jasmine, I want to be sure you eat enough food. Let’s do this: I’ll feed you one spoonful of applesauce; then you take a turn feeding applesauce to yourself.”</p>
<p><b>What Jasmine Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To attempt simple personal care tasks (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, c. Takes care of own needs appropriately</i>)</p> <p>To use whole hand to grasp and drop objects (<i>Objective 7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength, a. Uses fingers and hands</i>)</p> <p>To notice particular characteristics of objects (<i>Objective 26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials</i>)</p> <p>To demonstrate awareness of a problem (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, c. Solves problems</i>)</p>

## Mobile Infants

From about 8–11 months, children learn to move their tongues from side to side. They have some teeth and begin to chew. They use their thumb and index finger to pick up objects, learn to eat from a spoon, drink milk from a cup with less spilling, and begin to feed themselves with their hands. Now they are ready to eat mashed, diced or strained fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, beans, and peas. They can also eat cottage cheese, yogurt, cheese strips, pieces of soft bread, and crackers. They continue to drink breast milk or iron-fortified formula and can also drink fruit juice, but now they drink from a cup as well as a bottle. At about 11 months, they begin to hold a cup and, with help, begin spoon-feeding themselves. Once infants can sit comfortably, they can sit in low, sturdy infant chairs at low tables.

*Barbara is sitting with Leo (18 months) and two other children at a low table as they eat lunch. She says, “M-m-m. These crackers are nice and crunchy.” Suddenly, Leo reaches over and grabs two crackers from Wanda’s plate. He starts to eat one of the crackers but stops when Wanda starts to scream. Leo quickly puts the crackers back on Wanda’s plate.*

<p><b>Barbara’s Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Wow! Leo actually put the crackers back on Wanda’s plate when she protested. I’ve been trying to help him use other children’s reactions to guide his behavior. Maybe it’s beginning to work!</p>
<p><b>How Barbara Responds</b></p>	<p>“Leo, Wanda was angry when you took her crackers. She’s glad you put them back. Would you like some more crackers?” Leo nods his head up and down. As she moves the plate closer to him, Barbara explains, “You may take some from this big plate.”</p>
<p><b>What Leo Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To use other’s facial expressions, gestures, or voices to guide his own behavior; to respond to the emotions of others (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, b. Responds to emotional cues</i>)</p> <p>To participate in group routines (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, c. Interacts with peers</i>)</p>

## Toddlers and Twos

Toddlers and twos continue to refine their fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. This enables them to participate even more in feeding themselves. They learn to hold and drink from a cup, eat with a spoon, and later eat with a fork. They begin serving themselves from bowls and even pour milk from a very small pitcher.

The physical growth of toddlers slows, so their appetites often decrease. As they become more successful at regulating their behavior, they usually stop eating when they are full. They need small servings of food throughout the day. Toddlers and twos often have strong food likes and dislikes, eat one favorite food for a while, and then often refuse to eat the food they used to prefer.

Start family-style meals, with small groups of children sitting at low tables. Provide utensils so they can serve themselves and eat independently. Encourage children to try new foods, but do not force them. They are more likely to try them if you serve foods in an appealing manner. Offer choices and be patient; they may need many opportunities to try a food before they actually eat it.

*Valisha (33 months) and Jonisha (33 months) have just finished eating lunch, served family style. Jonisha says, "I want more milk. I can pour it." Then she exclaims, "Oops!" as the milk she is pouring from a small pitcher makes a puddle on the floor. She stands up, goes to the sink, and gets a paper towel. After she tries wiping the spill with the towel, she says, "There's too much. I'll get the mop." She puts the paper towel in the trash can, gets the child-size mop, and, with some help from LaToya, cleans up the spill.*

<p><b>LaToya's Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Jonisha thought of a good solution to the problem of spilled milk. When it didn't work, she thought of and carried out another, more effective solution.</p> <p>I think I can find ways to help her practice pouring at the water table and in the pretend play area.</p> <p>I wonder if that pitcher is just too big for the children.</p>
<p><b>How LaToya Responds</b></p>	<p>"Milk sometimes spills, Jonisha. You figured out the best way to clean it up. I think that pitcher might be too big. I'll look for a smaller one, to make it easier to pour milk without spilling it."</p>
<p><b>What Jonisha Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To use eye-hand coordination while doing increasingly complex tasks (<i>Objective 7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength, a. Uses fingers and hands</i>)</p> <p>To continue an activity until her goal is reached (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, a. Attends and engages</i>)</p> <p>To carry out her own plan for solving simple problems (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, c. Solves problems</i>)</p> <p>To use simple sentences with three or more words (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, c. Uses conventional grammar</i>)</p>

# Sleeping and Nap Time

*Leo (18 months) is lying on the cushion in the book nook, rubbing his eyes. Barbara remarks, "You're a sleepy boy, even though your mama said that you slept well last night. You usually don't nap until 11:00, but I think you need an early nap today. Would you like to sit in the rocking chair with me before you lie down?" Leo nods, "Yes." He snuggles on Barbara's lap in the chair. Barbara holds Leo and rocks him until he is ready to lie down on his cot.*

Sleep is necessary for healthy growth and development, so sleeping and nap time are important parts of a program for young children. Very young infants sleep most of the day, waking only for diapering, feeding, and other care. Active toddlers and 2-year-olds, by contrast, spend more time awake than asleep, napping for an hour or more to restore their energy. Even a child who does not seem to want to sleep will benefit from a rest time away from group activities. A well-rested child is better able to participate fully in the program.

Because each infant's sleep-wake cycle is likely to be different, meeting the individual needs of the infants in your care can be challenging. Even though toddlers and twos generally sleep on regular schedules and might nap as a group, it is still necessary to look for cues to their individual and changing needs. One child may need to nap earlier than usual on a particular day. Another may sleep for less or more time than he does ordinarily.

Strengthening your relationship with children is as important as meeting their physical needs when you put them to sleep. When you sing a soft lullaby and rock an infant, or read a story and rub a toddler's back at nap time, you show that you care about her well-being and security.

## Responding to What Children Need

Your plans and methods of managing sleeping and nap time will differ according to the ages of the children in your care and what you know about each child.

## Young Infants

Young infants typically develop a consistent sleep-wake cycle between 3 and 6 months of age. This cycle of staying awake when it is light and going to sleep when it is dark is known as *Circadian rhythm*. Infants with an established Circadian rhythm typically sleep 9–12 hours during the night and take 30- to 120-minute naps, 1–4 times a day.<sup>33</sup> By the time they are age 1, they may take fewer and shorter naps during the day. Infants communicate their need for sleep by crying, rubbing their eyes, or simply falling asleep wherever they are. While sleeping, they often appear restless, twitch their arms and legs, smile, and suck.<sup>34</sup> As you respond to their sleep signals, you are helping them regulate their behavior.

<p><i>Jasmine (8 months) has previously enjoyed being rocked to sleep. However, when Janet rocks her at nap time today, Jasmine continues to squirm and cry. Janet tries to put Jasmine in her crib, but she cries even harder.</i></p>	
<p><b>Janet's Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>I know that Jasmine is not hungry and that she has a clean diaper. I think she is just tired and needs a nap, but she seems to be resisting my efforts to help her fall asleep. Even though rocking is usually what she likes, it isn't working today. I wonder if her mother left a note this morning that might give me a clue.</p>
<p><b>How Janet Responds</b></p>	<p>Janet carries Jasmine to the bulletin board where family notes are posted. She finds a note and reads that Jasmine might be teething and that, although she needs more time than usual to calm down, she still reacts well to rocking. Janet decides to go back to rocking and to sing Jasmine one of her favorite lullabies. Within 5 minutes, Jasmine's body relaxes and quiets. She looks up at Janet, who is still singing.</p>
<p><b>What Jasmine Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To express a variety of emotions and needs, using facial expressions, body movement, and vocalizations  <i>(Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, c. Takes care of own needs appropriately)</i></p> <p>To show interest in the speech of others <i>(Objective 8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language, a. Comprehends language)</i></p>

## Mobile Infants

Children at this stage tend to take fewer naps. They also give verbal or nonverbal signals that they need to rest. For instance, mobile infants may appear drowsy (even if they have just arrived at child care). They may cry or be irritable and difficult to comfort. Sometimes mobile infants protest strongly when you put them in their cribs, even though they are tired. When you respond consistently to their cues, you promote children’s learning about nap time routines. Mobile infants begin to regulate their sleep-wake cycle to get the rest they need.

*Willard (11 months) arrives at the center this morning at 7:30. He is in a good mood for a while, as he plays with play dough, trucks, and blocks. At 10:15, Grace observes that he cries every time another child comes near him. When she offers a toy or tries to involve him in another activity, he does not engage with it.*

<p><b>Grace’s Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Willard hasn’t napped in the morning for a few weeks, but he seems tired today. I think a nap might help him. Without one, he might become overly tired and unable to eat lunch or play happily.</p> <p>How can I help him to relax and rest for a little while?</p>
<p><b>How Grace Responds</b></p>	<p>Grace rubs Willard’s back and says, “Willard, you look tired. I think a rest might help.” He does not respond. Next she offers him his favorite blanket, saying, “Here’s your blankie.” He looks up at Grace, raising his arms. She picks him up, takes him to the glider, sits him in her lap, rubs his back, and rocks him. He snuggles to her and closes his eyes.</p>
<p><b>What Willard Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To use others’ facial expressions, gestures, and voices to guide his own behavior (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, a. Manages feelings</i>)</p> <p>To respond to simple gestures and to the intonation, pitch, and volume of simple speech (<i>Objective 8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language, a. Comprehends language</i>)</p>

## Toddlers and Twos

Toddlers and twos usually take one nap a day, lasting 1–3 hours. They communicate their need for sleep both nonverbally and verbally. Sometime during their second year, children change from sleeping in the morning and afternoon to sleeping only during the afternoon. As time passes, they may take longer to calm down and fall asleep, or they may just rest and not sleep on some days. During this time, one nap might not be enough and two might be too many. This transition can be difficult, especially in group care situations. Remain flexible and plan your day to allow for one or two nap periods per day. Plan for a quiet time to help toddlers transition from active play to sleep, and prepare experiences for children when they wake up. As you plan, remember that some children will be ready to play actively while others are still sleeping. Despite changes in their need for sleep, children still depend on you to help them regulate sleep and wakefulness.

*Mercedes has put on some soft music and is sitting on the floor between two cots, gently rubbing children's backs to help them relax at nap time. In another part of the room, Matthew (22 months) is rolling around on his cot and babbling. Mercedes hears a thud and realizes that Matthew has thrown a book across the room.*

<p><b>Mercedes' Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Every day this week, Matthew has had difficulty relaxing and falling asleep. Even when I put him in a quiet corner alone, he manages to disrupt the other children.</p> <p>How can I help Matthew and the other children in my room at the same time?</p>
<p><b>How Mercedes Responds</b></p>	<p>Matthew continues to roll on his cot, so Mercedes walks quietly across the room and softly says to him, "I can see that you are tired of this book, but when you throw books someone might get hurt." She offers Matthew a soft book and a cloth bunny. She tells him that he may play with them until she returns. "When I come back, I will read a story to you," she says. He says, "Yeah, book" and begins looking at the book while he talks to the bunny.</p>
<p><b>What Matthew Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To respond to simple directions and sometimes test limits (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, b. Follow limits and expectations</i>)</p> <p>To speak in two-word phrases (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, c. Uses conventional grammar</i>)</p>

# Getting Dressed

*Brooks is about to dress Abby (14 months). She starts by playing peek-a-boo with Abby's shirt. Hiding her face behind the shirt, Brooks playfully pretends to worry, "I can't see Abby! Where is Abby?" While Abby giggles in response, Brooks gently slides the shirt over her head and says, "There she is! First we put your head through and then your arms." Abby cooperates by extending her arms, as Brooks offers one armhole and then the other. "Thank you for helping me put your shirt on," Brooks says. Abby then holds up a sock, and Brooks asks, "Where does the sock go?" Abby smiles broadly and touches her foot. "Right, it goes on your foot."*

Infants, toddlers, and twos are totally dependent on adults to provide for their basic needs. One basic need is clothing. Meeting this need includes dressing children in clothes that are clean and dry and that are appropriate for the weather and for both indoor and outdoor play.

Dressing and undressing children are simple yet repetitive activities that can become tiresome when approached as tasks to be completed quickly. Changing clothing may even become a struggle when a child resists you or insists on doing it herself. By approaching dressing and undressing as troublesome chores rather than as learning opportunities, you miss chances to enjoy being with a child and encourage new skills.

## Responding to What Children Need

Depending upon their temperaments and developmental levels, children react to dressing very differently. Vary your approaches according to what you know about each child.

### Young Infants

Young infants interact with you one-on-one during dressing. When Linda changes Julio's clothing, he explores his environment by looking around and listening. As she sings and talks to him in gentle tones, he explores his world. He focuses on Linda's face; visually searches the room to identify the sources of sounds; and moves his hands and feet, learning where his body ends and the rest of the world begins. He experiments with his voice, cooing softly, gurgling, and squealing. Before long, he begins to participate in dressing by extending a leg for a sock and by pushing his arms through armholes.

*Linda is feeding Julio (4 months) a bottle. When he finishes, she rocks him, and he becomes drowsy. As she lays him in his crib, she notices that the neck of his sleeper is wet under his chin. However, he does not seem to mind and falls asleep immediately.*

<b>Linda's Thoughts and Questions</b>	Julio's sleeper is wet. I know that keeping him clean and dry is important. Should I wake him to change his sleeper now, or let him sleep and change it when he wakes?
<b>How Linda Responds</b>	Linda checks to see how much of Julio's sleeper is wet and whether he is chilled. She decides to wait until he wakes up and to change his sleeper when she changes his diaper.
<b>What Julio Might Be Learning</b>	To develop routine patterns for sleeping and other basic needs, with adult's help ( <i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, c. Takes care of own needs appropriately</i> ).

## Mobile Infants

Mobile infants may cooperate as you dress them. You may also witness their emerging sense of independence as they take off clothing frequently during the day, especially their socks and shoes. Celebrate their accomplishments before you put their clothes back on. A simple acknowledgment of their success is helpful in supporting their development, as when you say, “You took your socks off all by yourself!”

*Brooks hears Abby (14 months) squeal with delight. Brooks looks across the room and sees Abby toddling across the carpet. She has a shoe on one foot. The other is bare. When Brooks notices Abby's sock and shoe nearby, she realizes that Abby removed them.*

<p><b>Brooks' Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>Abby seems to be enjoying herself and her accomplishments. I realize that learning to dress and undress is important, but one of her feet is bare and the floor is a little cold.</p> <p>I know Abby will probably protest and resist my attempts to put her sock and shoe back on.</p> <p>How can I help her put them back on without a power struggle?</p>
<p><b>How Brooks Responds</b></p>	<p>Brooks picks up Abby's shoe and sock. She approaches Abby with both in hand and playfully crawls beside her on the floor.</p> <p>As Brooks crawls, she sings, “Where is Abby? Where is Abby? She's missing her sock and her shoe. Where is Abby? Where is Abby? She's missing her sock and her shoe.” Abby laughs. Brooks laughs and cuddles her while slipping on her sock and shoe.</p>
<p><b>What Abby Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To use others' facial expressions, gestures, or voices to guide own behavior (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, b. Responds to emotional cues</i>)</p> <p>To attempt simple personal care tasks (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, c. Takes care of own needs appropriately</i>)</p>

## Toddlers and Twos

Toddlers and twos are developing the skills they need to put on and take off simple clothing by themselves. They gain confidence in their abilities when you take note of their accomplishments. Toddlers and twos may insist, “Me do it!” when you attempt to help them. They may also try to assert control or independence by playing a game of chase when you want to dress them. Remember that they are not trying to make your life difficult. They are trying to take charge of themselves.

*Mercedes helps the children in her room get ready to go outside. They put on their coats, hats, and gloves. Everyone is ready to go except Matthew (22 months), who has his hat and coat on but is struggling with his zipper. Mercedes approaches Matthew, kneels down, and asks, “Matthew, may I help you with your zipper?” Matthew says, “No,” and turns away.*

<p><b>Mercedes’ Thoughts and Questions</b></p>	<p>I know that Matthew likes to do things by himself, but the rest of the group is ready to go outside. I want to support Matthew’s desire to do things on his own, but I don’t want the other children to have to wait too long. I know that, if I don’t do something to gain his cooperation, this situation could turn into a power struggle.</p> <p>How can I support Matthew’s independence and avoid a power struggle while helping him get his coat zipped?</p>
<p><b>How Mercedes Responds</b></p>	<p>Mercedes gently touches Matthew’s arm and says, “Matthew, will you please help me zip my coat?” Matthew turns around and looks at her coat. As she begins zipping, Mercedes says, “I’ll start at the bottom. Will you finish zipping it all the way up for me?” Matthew smiles and zips her coat. “Zzzzip!” responds Mercedes, exaggerating the word. Matthew laughs. “Now, how about your coat? I’ll start the zipper, and then you can zip it all the way up.” Matthew agrees. As he zips his coat, he repeats Mercedes’ exaggerated, “Zzzzip!”</p>
<p><b>What Matthew Might Be Learning</b></p>	<p>To try more complex personal care tasks, with increasing success (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, c. Takes care of own needs appropriately</i>)</p> <p>To use eye-hand coordination while doing simple tasks (<i>Objective 7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength, a. Uses fingers and hands</i>)</p> <p>To demonstrate understanding of simple directions, questions, and explanations (<i>Objective 8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language, b. Follows directions</i>)</p>

# Experiences

## Playing With Toys

*Brooks shakes a covered shoebox to show Abby (14 months) that something is inside. Opening her mouth in surprise, Brooks prompts, “I wonder what’s making that noise.” Abby reaches for the box and pulls off the lid. Inside is a collection of large, colorful, plastic laundry detergent bottle tops that Brooks has saved. Abby reaches in with both hands and picks up two bottle tops. She looks them over, bangs them together a few times, and then tosses them onto the rug. Several more times, she reaches into the box with one hand, grasps another top, and throws it. “You really like to throw bottle tops,” Brooks comments. With a big smile, Abby dumps the rest of the tops out of the box and claps her hands.*

Some of the very best playthings for infants, toddlers, and twos are not commercial toys. They are simply common objects and natural materials that appeal to children and that can be explored safely. Large plastic bottle tops, cardboard boxes, crinkly tissue paper, wooden and plastic kitchen utensils, pinecones, leaves, and shells appeal to young children as much as many toys you can purchase (and sometimes even more). Any object that young children can explore, put together, take apart, push or pull, stack, or bang becomes a toy in a child’s hands.

Many toys are designed to entertain children and capture their attention, for example, mobiles that swing and play music and wind-up toys that move across the floor. Other toys are structured to fit together in a particular way: puzzles, nesting cups, and pegboards. Still others are open-ended and can be used in a variety of ways: to build and stack, or to create a pattern or design.

All toys must meet safety standards so that children under 3 can explore them safely with all of their senses. Effective toys capture children’s attention, keep them engaged, and help them acquire and strengthen new skills.

## Responding to and Planning for Each Child

As you observe children playing with toys, think about the goals, objectives, and steps of the *Developmental Continuum*. Consider what each child is learning and how you might respond. Here is how four teachers who are implementing *The Creative Curriculum* use what they learn from their observations to respond to each child and to plan.

Observe	Reflect	Respond
<p>Julio (4 months) lies on his tummy on a play mat. He reaches for a teether, grabs it, and brings it to his mouth. He continues to look around the mat for several minutes, and then he notices two children pushing trucks. He watches them and begins to grunt, moving his head up and down.</p>	<p>Julio is using his whole hand to grasp objects (<i>Objective 6. Demonstrates gross-motor skills</i>).</p> <p>He is beginning to move purposefully (<i>Objective 4. Demonstrates traveling skills</i>).</p> <p>He watches and responds to other children (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, c. Interacts with peers</i>).</p>	<p>Linda decides to encourage Julio's interest in the other children by responding to the cues that tell her that he would like to change his position. She says, "You see those two girls playing with the trucks. I'll pick you up, and we'll move closer so you can see them better."</p>
<p>Abby (14 months) fills a purse with small blocks and carries it as she toddles around the room. She approaches Samanda, opens the purse to show her what is inside, and then continues carrying it around.</p>	<p>Abby is walking with increasing coordination (<i>Objective 4. Demonstrates traveling skills</i>).</p> <p>She is engaging momentarily with other children (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, c. Interacts with peers</i>).</p>	<p>Brooks provides other objects for Abby to carry, so Abby can strengthen her large-muscle skills and balance.</p> <p>She encourages her engagement with other children by saying, "Abby, I think Samanda wants to look carefully at the blocks you collected. Will you please show them to her again?"</p>
<p>Leo (18 months) takes the top off a shape sorter and dumps out all of the shapes. He brings it over to a bucket of plastic people and begins to fill the sorter with the people. When the sorter is full and no more people will fit, he holds it up to Barbara and asks, "Mo'?"</p>	<p>Leo is using one hand to hold an object and the other hand to manipulate another object (<i>Objective 7. Demonstrates fine motor strength and coordination, a. Uses fingers and hands</i>).</p> <p>He is experimenting with trial and error approaches to simple problems (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, c. Solves problems</i>).</p> <p>He is using gestures, word-like sounds, and single words to communicate (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, b. Speaks clearly</i>).</p>	<p>Barbara responds to Leo by describing the problem: "I don't think any more will fit in there, Leo."</p> <p>She encourages him to solve the problem by asking, "What else can you put the people in?" She pauses, giving him time to think about the question, and then offers some suggestions. She asks, "How about using a bigger container so that more people will fit?" Then, as she points to a collection of baskets and a cardboard box, she adds, "We have baskets and a big box."</p>
<p>Gena (30 months) is playing with the farm animals. She puts three horses next to each other, places two pigs together, and matches two sheep. She looks up and says, "Same, same. All the same."</p>	<p>Gena is grouping objects with similar characteristics (<i>Objective 13. Uses classification skills</i>).</p> <p>She uses simple sentences with three or more words (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, c. Uses conventional grammar</i>).</p>	<p>Ivan acknowledges Gena's work, saying, "I see you have put all the horses together, the pigs together, and the sheep together." To encourage her language development, he expands what she said. "All of the horses, all of the pigs, and all of the sheep. The same kind of animal goes together."</p>

## Imitating and Pretending

*Leo (18 months) is sitting on the floor with a large pot and wooden spoon. “It looks like you are busy cooking something, Leo,” remarks Barbara. Leo continues to stir. “What are you making?” she asks. Leo looks up and smiles. Barbara says, “M-m-m, it smells like pea soup to me.” When Leo nods, Barbara says, “I thought so. May I please have some of your soup?” She gets a bowl and hands it to Leo. When he doesn’t respond, Barbara says, “Oh, I’m silly. You need a big ladle to serve the soup.” She hands a ladle to Leo, who pretends to serve some soup to her.*

Pretending is a way of learning as well as a way of playing, and it requires a great deal of thinking. Pretending shows that children are developing from the sensorimotor thinking of infancy to more mature symbolic thinking. It evolves gradually from the imitation and exploration of infants, toddlers, and twos.

Young infants imitate facial expressions, many of the language sounds they hear, and the immediate actions of others. By about age 15 months, mobile infants can remember the actions on objects that they have previously seen others perform, so they are able to imitate those actions later.<sup>39</sup> Being able to remember and then imitate an action is important to early pretend play, which often takes the form of reproducing the actions children have seen others make. Toddlers and twos remember past experiences and often purposefully pretend to be something or someone else, such as a great big monster or a daddy feeding a baby.

When you show an infant how to wave bye-bye, clap her hands together, and play peek-a-boo, you are encouraging her to engage with others and to imitate speech and actions. When you see a mobile infant imitating a puppy and you say, “What a nice puppy!” you are encouraging him to continue to pretend. When you hold a doll on your shoulder and pat its back, you are showing a toddler how to pretend about real life situations. When you hand a toy phone to a 2-year-old so he can pretend to call the doctor about his sick baby, you are teaching him how to pretend with objects.

## Responding to and Planning for Each Child

As you observe children imitating and pretending, think about the goals, objectives, and steps of the *Developmental Continuum*. Consider what each child is learning and how you should respond. Here is how four teachers who are implementing *The Creative Curriculum* use what they learn from their observations to respond to each child and to plan.

Observe	Reflect	Respond
<p>Jasmine (8 months) picks up a bright red plastic block and examines it. She looks at Holly, who is banging a wooden spoon on an empty oatmeal box. After watching her, Jasmine starts to bang her block on the floor.</p>	<p>Jasmine is watching and responding to other children (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, c. Interacts with peers</i>).</p> <p>She imitates the actions of others (<i>Objective 14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present, b. Engages in sociodramatic play</i>).</p>	<p>Janet describes what Jasmine is doing, “You are watching Holly and making a big noise by banging that block.</p> <p>She imitates Jasmine’s actions, using a cup: “I think I’ll see what noise I can make with this cup. Bang, bang.”</p>
<p>Abby (14 months) goes over to Jessie (16 months), who is wearing a hat, and tries to take it off. Brooks says, “Jessie is wearing that hat. I see you want one, too.” She hands Abby a hat. Abby accepts it, puts it on her head, and smiles at Jessie.</p>	<p>Abby responds to verbal redirection (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, b. Follows limits and expectations</i>).</p> <p>She has brief play encounters with other children (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, c. Interacts with peers</i>).</p>	<p>Brooks wants to encourage Abby’s interest in other children. She tries to involve her in pretending with one or two other children. She says, “Now you each have a hat to wear. Would you like to play with these trucks while you wear your hats?”</p>
<p>Matthew (22 months) is wearing a firefighter hat and holding a paper towel roll. He walks around the room saying, “Shhhh. Out, fire!”</p>	<p>Matthew substitutes one object for another in pretend play (<i>Objective 14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present, b. Engages in sociodramatic play</i>).</p> <p>He is beginning to express himself in two-word phrases (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, c. Uses conventional grammar</i>).</p>	<p>Mercedes expands what Matthew says and asks questions to encourage him to express his ideas verbally and extend his pretend play: “I see you have a hose to squirt the fire. Is it a big fire? Do you need a lot of water? Here, I’ll turn on the fire hydrant for you. Is that enough water?”</p>
<p>Valisha (33 months) puts a plastic stethoscope around her neck and announces, “Doctor is here.” Jonisha (33 months) holds up a baby doll and explains, “She sick. She needs some medicine.” Valisha says, “Okay,” as she opens the black bag she is holding. “Here’s some,” she says as she hands Jonisha a small wooden block.</p>	<p>Valisha and Jonisha are using objects in pretend play as they are used in real life and substituting one object for another in pretend play (<i>Objective 14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present, b. Engages in sociodramatic play</i>).</p> <p>They are participating in coordinated play (<i>Objective 9. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, c. Interacts with peers</i>).</p> <p>They are using simple sentences with three or more words (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, c. Uses conventional grammar</i>).</p>	<p>Deciding not to interrupt their play, LaToya observes the sisters as they continue to play with the doctor props and doll. She pulls a piece of paper out of her pocket and writes a quick observation note describing their pretend play.</p>

# Enjoying Stories and Books

*Matthew (24 months) hands Mercedes a book as they sit together in the book area. She asks, "Do you want me to read Mrs. Wishy-Washy again?" Matthew opens the book to the picture of the cow in the tub. "In went the cow," says Mercedes. "Wishy-washy, wishy-washy," Matthew responds. "In went the pig," Mercedes reads. "Wishy-washy, wishy-washy," chant Marcella and Deneitra, who have joined them. "Away went the cow. Away went the pig. Away went the duck. Oh, lovely mud," Mercedes reads.<sup>48</sup> "Again, again," Matthew urges. "Love mud."*

Sharing stories and books with young children can be among the most treasured times of your day. With so many excellent books to touch, look at, and listen to, children will grow to love books. Even young infants, who do not yet understand the messages found in books, learn from exploring them.

Your interaction as you snuggle together with a book, your enthusiasm, the way you bring a story to life through your dramatic reading, and your interesting questions make the experience special for very young children. Because you know the children in your group so well, you can choose wonderful books for an infant to manipulate and explore, a toddler who is about to acquire a new brother or sister, or a 2-year-old who loves animals.

## Responding to and Planning for Each Child

As you observe children interacting with stories and books, think about the goals, steps, and objectives of the *Developmental Continuum*. Consider what each child is learning and how you might respond. Here is how four teachers who are implementing *The Creative Curriculum* use what they learn from their observations to respond to each child and to plan.

Observe	Reflect	Respond
<p>Julio (4 months) and Linda are sitting together in the glider, reading a board book. A different animal is pictured on each page, and Linda tells him what each is called. As she turns each page, Julio squeals with delight and bangs his hands on the book. After a few minutes, he turns his head and pushes the book away.</p>	<p>Julio is showing interest in the speech of others (<i>Objective 8. Listens and understands increasingly complex language, a. Comprehends language</i>).</p> <p>He is using his body movements and vocalizations to communicate (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary</i>).</p> <p>He is actively manipulating books as they are read aloud (<i>Objective 17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses, a. Uses and appreciates books</i>).</p>	<p>Linda notices Julio’s nonverbal cues and says, “You are all done with the story.” She closes the book and follows his gaze to see what caught his attention.</p>
<p>Willard (11 months) sits in Grace’s lap as she reads him a counting book about babies. “One, two, three babies are smiling at me.” As she reads each number, she bounces Willard gently on her knees. He laughs and turns the page.</p>	<p>Willard is continuing an activity when an adult interacts (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, a. Attends and engages</i>).</p> <p>He is engaging briefly with books as they are read aloud and finding pleasure in the experience (<i>Objective 17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses, a. Uses and appreciates books</i>).</p>	<p>Grace acknowledges Willard’s delight. “You like to bounce when we count the babies.” She continues to read the book with Willard, bouncing him gently as she counts.</p>
<p>“Let’s look at the photo album your mother brought in today,” Barbara suggests to Leo (18 months) as they settle down in a comfortable chair. She turns to the first picture and asks, “Where’s Mommy?” Leo points to his mother, father, and himself in the picture, identifying, “Mommy. Daddy. Me, me.”</p>	<p>Leo is using single words to communicate (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary</i>).</p> <p>He is recognizing and showing a beginning understanding of pictures (<i>Objective 17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses, b. Uses print concepts</i>).</p>	<p>Barbara continues to ask Leo questions about the photos to encourage his language development. “What does your dog say?” Leo responds, “Woof, woof.” Then Barbara asks “Who is this? Is she your grandma?”</p>
<p>Gena (30 months) is sitting in the book area with her doll, Molly. She picks up a favorite book and turns the pages, pointing at pictures and talking quietly to Molly. She continues even when Sam sits down beside her.</p>	<p>Gena is continuing an activity until her own goal is reached, despite distractions (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, a. Attends and engages</i>).</p> <p>She is pretending to read a favorite book (<i>Objective 18. Comprehends and responds to books, b. Uses emergent reading skills</i>).</p>	<p>Ivan observes Gena and writes a quick observation note. He also notices that Sam is interested in what she is doing. To encourage Gena to interact with other children, Ivan says, “Gena, I see that you are reading your book to Molly. Is it all right if Sam and I listen, too?”</p>

# Connecting With Music and Movement

*Jasmine (8 months) is sitting on the floor, bouncing to some music. Janet says, “It looks as though you want to dance.” She sits next to Jasmine and joins her in moving to the beat. They smile at one another. Then Janet holds out her arms and asks, “Would you like to dance?” When Jasmine reaches toward her, Janet picks her up and begins dancing across the room. Jasmine laughs and bounces up and down in Janet’s arms.*

Most people enjoy listening to, creating, and moving to music. Music affects our emotions and inspires movement. Newborn infants can often be comforted by the rhythmic sound of an adult’s heart as they are held closely, or by being rocked steadily or bounced gently. By the time they can sit, infants often bob their heads and torsos or move their arms to music.

Just as toddlers and twos want to hear favorite stories again and again, they like to hear and sing favorite songs repeatedly. You may hear toddlers and twos chorus refrains such as “E-I-E-I-O” as they play. They love to make music by hitting a pot with a spoon or by playing real instruments, and they enjoy moving to different tempos and rhythms.

As infants, toddlers, and twos move to music in different ways, they stretch their bodies and imaginations. Whether they move their hands in fingerplays or move their whole bodies as they dance, children respond to the rhythm and beat of music and the related words. You can offer spontaneous and planned music and movement experiences that encourage listening, singing, fingerplay, dancing, and other ways of moving and making music.

## Responding to and Planning for Each Child

As you observe young children during music and movement experiences, think about the goals, objectives, and steps of the *Developmental Continuum*. Consider what each child is learning and how you might respond. Here is how four teachers who are implementing *The Creative Curriculum* use what they learn from their observations to respond to each child and to plan.

Observe	Reflect	Respond
<p>Linda holds Julio (4 months) as she rocks him in the glider. She sings, “Duérmeme mi niño. Duérmeme mi sol. Duérmeme pedazo, De mi corazón. Go to sleep my baby. Go to sleep my sunshine. You will always be in this heart of mine.” Julio gazes at Linda as she sings. His body relaxes, and his eyes begin to close.</p>	<p>Julio is beginning to develop his own pattern for sleeping (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, c. Takes care of own needs appropriately</i>).</p> <p>He is showing an interest in the speech of others (<i>Objective 8. Listens and understands increasingly complex language, a. Comprehends language</i>).</p>	<p>Linda continues to sing and rock Julio until she sees that he is ready to go to sleep. She gently lays him in his crib as she continues to sing softly. Julio drifts off to sleep as Linda notes the time on his family’s communication log.</p>
<p>Willard (11 months) watches as Grace puts a CD in the CD player. He smiles when the music starts, bounces up and down, and babbles, “Du-du-du.”</p>	<p>Willard is discovering that repeated actions yield similar effects (<i>Objective 12. Remembers and connects experiences, b. Makes connections</i>).</p> <p>He is babbling and combining sounds to communicate (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary</i>).</p>	<p>Grace acknowledges Willard’s interest, “Willard, I see you smiling and dancing. You must like the music.” To encourage his language development, she imitates his sounds, “Du-du-du. You are singing with the music. Du-du-du.”</p>
<p>Leo (18 months) sits on the floor with a xylophone. He hits the colored keys with the mallet, one by one. He looks at Barbara and laughs.</p>	<p>Leo is learning how objects can be used by handling them (<i>Objective 11, Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking</i>).</p> <p>He explores ways to make something happen (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, d. Shows curiosity and motivation</i>).</p>	<p>Barbara encourages Leo’s interest in the xylophone by saying, “Leo, I hear you making music.” As he hits another key, Barbara raises the pitch of her voice and says, “You made a high note.” He hits another key and looks at her. “You made a low note,” she says, lowering her pitch.</p>
<p>Jonisha (33 months) sits under a tree on the playground, watching leaves blow in the wind. Later, inside the room, LaToya turns on some music. Jonisha waves her arms around, rocks her body back and forth, and spins in a circle. She says, “Look! I’m a leaf!”</p>	<p>Jonisha is using simple sentences with three or more words (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, c. Uses conventional grammar</i>).</p> <p>She is making use of imaginary objects in pretend play (<i>Objective 14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present, b. Engages in sociodramatic play</i>).</p>	<p>LaToya acknowledges Jonisha’s play by saying, “You are moving like those leaves on the windy playground.”</p> <p>To support Jonisha’s language development, LaToya says, “Those leaves were swirling around and around in the wind. They were and moving just the way you are moving now.”</p>

# Creating With Art

*Brooks helps Abby (14 months) put on a smock and says, “Abby, I see you are ready to help me make some squishy Cloud Dough today.” Abby nods, and Brooks places a bowl of flour along with plastic pitchers of pre-measured salad oil and water on the table. Abby, who is familiar with the process, looks up at Brooks expectantly. As Brooks begins to pour the flour into the mixing bowl, Abby extends her arm into the stream of flour and squeals with delight. Brooks encourages, “Doesn’t the flour feel cool and soft? It’s going to feel very different when we finish making the dough.”*

Art for infants, toddlers, and twos is largely a sensory experience. A young infant strokes the fringe on a stuffed animal and relaxes contentedly. A mobile infant joyfully tears colored tissue paper and waves the pieces in the air. A toddler squeals with delight as she moves her fingers through smooth finger paint. Twos are beginning to understand that pictures, models, and constructions represent people and things. A 2-year-old pokes, pounds, and then rolls out a lump of play dough and proudly shows you how he mixed two colors together to make marbled dough. Young children are interested in what different materials are like and what they can do with them. They are not intent on making a product (as older children can be). Painting lines on paper with a brush and tearing paper into pieces are satisfying experiences by themselves.

When you provide a variety of art experiences for young children, they discover that certain materials feel interesting and are fun to use. They also learn that they can control and make marks with a variety of tools and materials. Older twos are beginning to understand that the pictures, models, and constructions they make can represent people and things. The everyday art experiences you offer infants, toddlers, and twos build a foundation for both appreciating and creating through art.

## Responding to and Planning for Each Child

As you observe children during art experiences, think about the goals, objectives, and steps of the *Developmental Continuum*. Consider what each child is learning and how you might respond. Here is how four teachers who are implementing *The Creative Curriculum* use what they learn from their observations to respond to each child and to plan.

Observe	Reflect	Respond
<p>Julio (4 months) nestles into Linda’s shoulder, rubbing his cheek on her soft sweater. He smiles and lays his head and hand on her shoulder, patting the sweater.</p>	<p>Julio recognizes and reaches out to a familiar adult (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, a. Forms relationships with adults</i>).</p> <p>He is exploring an object using his senses (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, d. Shows curiosity and motivation</i>).</p>	<p>Linda talks to Julio in soothing tones to help build a trusting relationship with him. She comments on what he is doing, “Feel how warm and fuzzy the sweater is, Julio.”</p>
<p>Willard (11 months) dips his fingers into paint and begins to push his finger across the paper in the tray. He makes a few small marks, dips his fingers in again, and makes a few more. He smiles, dips his whole hand in, and smears it across the entire paper.</p>	<p>Willard is learning how objects work by handling them (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, d. Shows curiosity and motivation</i>).</p> <p>He is noticing characteristics of objects (<i>Objective 26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials</i>).</p>	<p>Grace encourages his exploration of the paint and says, “Willard you covered your whole paper.” She points to a blank sheet of paper and asks, “Would you like to paint another?”</p>
<p>Matthew (22 months) holds a marker in each hand, scribbling up and down on a large piece paper. He looks at Jenna (24 months), who is also drawing with markers. Then he reaches over and draws a line across her paper. Jenna scowls. Matthew quickly pulls his hand away.</p>	<p>Matthew is showing awareness that others’ feelings are separate from his own feelings (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, b. Responds to emotional cues</i>).</p> <p>He is experimenting with scribbling (<i>Objective 7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength, b. Uses writing and drawing tools</i>).</p>	<p>To support Matthew’s understanding of others’ feelings, Mercedes explains, “Jenna didn’t like it when you wrote on her paper. She made an angry face, and you stopped.”</p> <p>“Here is your paper, Matthew,” she says as she points to his paper. “You can make lots of lines on this one.”</p>
<p>While playing outside, Valisha (33 months) picks up a piece of stubby chalk and begins scribbling on the blacktop. She tells LaToya, “I drawing hopscotch.”</p>	<p>Valisha is scribbling with the intention of communicating (<i>Objective 19. Demonstrates emergent writing skills, b. Writes to convey meaning</i>).</p> <p>She is coordinating her eye and hand movements to complete increasingly complicated tasks (<i>Objective 7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength, a. Uses fingers and hands</i>).</p>	<p>To promote Valisha’s positive feelings about her writing, LaToya says, “Oh, I see that you are drawing a hopscotch board with that chalk. We can play hopscotch when you are finished?”</p>

# Tasting and Preparing Food

*LaToya tells the children in her group, “We have an exciting snack today. We have carrots right from our garden! After we scrub them, we can taste the vegetable we grew.” LaToya asks Valisha (33 months) to help her set vegetable brushes and water bowls on the trays in front of the children. She then hands each child two carrots to scrub. As Jonisha (33 months) displays her washed carrot for the other children to see, LaToya exclaims, “I don’t think it could be any cleaner!”*

When you invite children to taste and otherwise explore a new food or include them in helping you prepare a snack, you are promoting more than good nutrition. Food and related conversation and activities encourage development and learning in all areas. They evoke feelings of security because children associate them with family and home. They also provide a wealth of sensory experiences and promote the development of fine motor, cognitive, and language skills.

Tasting and preparing food are part of everyday living with infants, toddlers, and twos. Children become aware of the tastes and textures of various cereals, fruits, and vegetables as you and their families gradually introduce new foods. They begin to express their personal preferences and start to learn the names of different foods. At first, they are primarily interested in squishing, mashing, and smearing food. Before long, they become eager and able to help prepare some of the foods they eat, especially because they like to participate in activities that are important to adults. Whether it is scrubbing a carrot or dipping a slice of apple in melted cheese, children enjoy and are proud to help you with meaningful tasks.

## Responding to and Planning for Each Child

As you observe children during tasting and food preparation experiences, think about the goals, objectives, and steps of the *Developmental Continuum*. Consider what each child is learning and how you might respond. Here is how four teachers who are implementing *The Creative Curriculum* use what they learn from their observations to respond to each child and to plan.

Observe	Reflect	Respond
<p>Jasmine (8 months) drinks from a cup as Janet holds it for her at snack time. She lifts her hands and bangs the sides of the cup.</p>	<p>Jasmine is attempting a simple personal care task (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, c. Takes care of own needs appropriately</i>).</p>	<p>Janet describes what Jasmine is doing, “You are drinking from the cup.” Then she asks, “Would you like to hold the cup?”</p>
<p>Abby (16 months) sits at the table when she sees Brooks setting it for snack.</p>	<p>Abby is expecting to participate in group routines (<i>Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors, b. Follows limits and expectations</i>).</p>	<p>Brooks says, “Abby, you know it is time to eat snack because you see me putting out the bowls.” She holds her hand out to Abby and says, “Let’s go wash our hands so we may eat.”</p>
<p>Matthew (22 months) is helping to make pancakes for breakfast. He pours milk from a small pitcher into the mixing bowl, spilling some on the table. He exclaims, “Uh-oh!” and gets a wipe to clean the table.</p>	<p>Matthew is using eye-hand coordination for simple tasks (<i>Objective 7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength, a. Uses fingers and hands</i>).</p> <p>He is planning ways to use objects to perform one-step tasks (<i>Objective 11, Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking</i>).</p>	<p>“Accidents happen,” Mercedes says. “Thank you for cleaning it up so quickly. Give it another try! We still need milk in the bowl.”</p>
<p>Valisha (33 months) pulls LaToya toward the toaster oven. She smells muffins baking and says, “Muffins are ready. I’m hungry.”</p>	<p>Valisha is carrying out her own plan for solving a problem (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, c. Solves problems</i>).</p> <p>She is using simple sentences with three or more words (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, c. Uses conventional grammar</i>).</p>	<p>LaToya acknowledges Valisha’s presence and interest by saying, “I smell those muffins, too. You are hungry and ready to eat them. They are almost done baking.”</p> <p>To encourage Valisha’s problem-solving skills, she asks, “What should we do to get the table ready for snack time?”</p>

# Exploring Sand and Water

*Willard (11 months) waves the rubber animal he has just washed. “That has to be the cleanest dinosaur I’ve ever seen! Look how shiny it is when it’s wet,” Grace exclaims. Willard babbles in reply and flashes a smile as he hands the dinosaur to her. He turns around and points at the shelf with the other rubber animals. “I bet you want to wash another animal,” Grace prompts. “How about this giraffe? He really needs a bath.”*

Sand and water are readily available and provide wonderful sensory experiences. There is something about the cool water and the sensation of sand sifting through fingers that almost everyone finds appealing. Sand and water are soothing materials that can calm children and keep them happily engaged.

Most young infants thoroughly enjoy simple water play. Being held by someone they love and the effects they get by kicking and slapping the water are satisfying experiences. Adding a few props, such as cups and rubber animals, can extend the play of mobile infants for long periods of time. Sand and water play are usually among the favorite activities of toddlers and twos, who purposefully explore and experiment with tools and other objects.

Sand and water play can take place outdoors or indoors. It all depends on the weather and your setup.

## Responding to and Planning for Each Child

As you observe children playing with sand and water, think about the goals, objectives, and steps of the *Developmental Continuum*. Consider what each child is learning and how you might respond. Here is how three teachers use what they learn from their observations to respond to each child and to plan.

Observe	Reflect	Respond
<p>Jasmine (8 months) holds both of Janet’s hands as she takes a few steps around the playground. Jasmine stops to watch two toddlers who are digging in the sandbox.</p>	<p>Jasmine watches and responds to other children (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, c. Interacts with peers</i>). She is beginning to gain balance and to move from place to place (<i>Objective 4. Demonstrates traveling skills</i>).</p>	<p>Janet sits with Jasmine on the ground near the children who are digging. She talks to Jasmine about what they are doing: “Tyler and Shontelle are having a great time, digging with their shovels.”</p>
<p>Willard (11 months) picks up a large plastic snap bead from the sand tray where he has been playing and hands it to Grace.</p>	<p>Willard uses his thumb and index finger to grasp and drop objects (<i>Objective 7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength, a. Uses fingers and hands</i>). He continues an activity when an adult interacts (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, a. Attends and engages</i>).</p>	<p>To encourage Willard, Grace smiles at him and says, “Thank you for the bead, Willard. May I have another one?”</p>
<p>Matthew (22 months) tries to take a small toy boat out of the water table by using a wooden spoon. The boat falls off the spoon. He tries again, but the boat falls. He looks around, chooses a small fishnet, and lifts the boat out. He looks at Mercedes and smiles.</p>	<p>Matthew plans ways to use objects to perform one-step tasks (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking</i>). He persists with trial-and-error approaches to solving a problem (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, b. Persists</i>).</p>	<p>Mercedes acknowledges Matthew’s accomplishment, “Matthew, you found a way to get the boat out. You used the net to solve the problem.” She challenges him: “What else can you pick up with the fishnet?”</p>

# Going Outdoors

*Ivan walks over to Gena (30 months), who, from her adaptive stroller, is admiring the fat pea pods growing in the wheelbarrow garden. “Those peas have really grown,” he says. “We’ll be able to eat them soon.” Gena nods and says, “Sun. More sun.” Ivan responds, “I think you’re right, Gena. We need to move our wheelbarrow garden to a sunny spot.” Gena watches Ivan move the garden and then turns her attention to some children who are chasing bubbles. Noticing that Gena is now more interested in what the children are doing, Ivan asks, “Do you want to go over and blow bubbles?” Gena smiles and exclaims, “Yes!” Ivan pushes her to join the other children, opens another jar of bubble solution, and holds the wand so Gena can blow. The other children run over to chase the bubbles, and Gena laughs.*

The outdoors offers an entirely different environment for children to explore. There are fresh air and weather to experience: sun, clouds, rain, snow, fog, wind, and hot and cold temperatures. Outdoor environments offer more open space in which to run and stretch. There are different landforms and structures to master: hills, boulders, platforms, tires, swings, and slides. There is also wildlife at which to marvel: caterpillars, worms, birds, bugs, and plants.

Infants, toddlers, and twos should go outdoors every day, unless the weather is extreme or the air quality poses a health risk. All young children need natural spaces that encourage sensory, physical, and social exploration. By the time they are mobile, children enjoy such experiences as splashing water and crawling over a path created with blankets, tires, and floor mats. As toddlers and twos, they cannot resist the challenges of running in open space, climbing on low tree stumps, and propelling themselves on riding toys.

## Responding to and Planning for Each Child

As you observe children outdoors, think about the goals, objectives, and steps of the *Developmental Continuum*. Consider what each child is learning and how you might respond. Here is how three teachers use what they learn from their observations to respond to each child and to plan.

Observe	Reflect	Respond
<p>Jasmine (8 months) sits on a blanket on the playground, holding a flower. She looks at it closely, turning it in her hands. She brings the flower to her face and rubs it on her nose and cheek. She looks at Janet, babbles, and smiles.</p>	<p>Jasmine is noticing particular characteristics of objects (<i>Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, d. Shows curiosity and motivation</i>).</p> <p>She is using facial expressions and vocalizations to communicate (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary</i>).</p>	<p>Janet promotes Jasmine’s language by responding, “Yes, I see that you have a yellow flower.”</p> <p>She encourages Jasmine’s examination of the flower by asking, “What does that flower smell like?” Janet leans over to smell the flower, inhaling deeply through her nose, to show Jasmine the meaning of her words.</p>
<p>Leo (18 months) walks around the park with Barbara and Donovan (16 months). Leo points to some fallen leaves and asks, “Dat?” He bends down, picks one up, and hands it to Barbara. She shows it to Donovan, who reaches out and touches it with his finger. Leo picks up another and hands it to Donovan. Donovan twirls the leaf in his hands. Leo picks up another and does the same.</p>	<p>Leo is having a brief play encounter with another child (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, c. Interacts with peers</i>).</p> <p>He is imitating the actions of others (<i>Objective 14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present, b. Engages in sociodramatic play</i>).</p> <p>He is using word-like sounds to communicate (<i>Objective 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs, b. Speaks clearly</i>).</p>	<p>Barbara says, “Leo, you found some leaves,” to model expressive language for him.</p> <p>She kneels down so that she is on the same level as the children. To support their play, she points to their leaves and describes what they are doing. “Donovan, Leo gave you a leaf. Now you each have one.”</p>
<p>Jonisha and Valisha (both 33 months) are bouncing a ball back and forth to each other on the playground. Valisha says, “I’m bouncing higher.” “Me, too,” Jonisha responds. “Ball goes higher and higher!” exclaims Valisha. Jonisha calls to LaToya, “Teacher, come see! Ball go so high!” Anton (32 months) stands near the girls, watching them. As LaToya approaches, Anton tugs at her sleeve, points at the girls, and says, “Me, too.”</p>	<p>They are participating in coordinated play with each other (<i>Objective 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships, c. Interacts with peers</i>).</p> <p>Jonisha and Valisha are participating in a conversation for two or more turns (<i>Objective 10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills, a. Engages in conversations</i>).</p>	<p>LaToya acknowledges Jonisha’s and Valisha’s play. “Wow! You are bouncing that ball so high! You are also passing it back and forth to each other.”</p> <p>LaToya wants to encourage the sisters to include others in their play. They frequently play together but not with other children. She says, “Anton is watching you pass that bouncy ball. I think he would like to bounce the ball with you.”</p>