

South Carolina Early Learning Standards

Approaches to Play and Learning (APL)

Curiosity, Information-Seeking, and Eagerness

1 Children show curiosity and express interest in the world around them. **APL-1**

Infants Birth: to 12 months

- a** Show interest in others (smile or gaze at caregiver, make sounds or move body when other person is near). **APL-1A**
- b** Show interest in themselves (watch own hands, play with own feet). **APL-1B**
- c** React to new sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and touches (stick out tongue at first solid food, turn head quickly when door slams). **APL-1C**

Younger Toddlers: 8 to 21 months

- d** Imitate what others are doing **APL-1D**
- e** Show curiosity about their surroundings (with pointing, facial expressions, words). **APL-1E**
- f** Show pleasure when exploring and making things happen (clap, smile, repeat action again and again). **APL-1F**

Older Toddlers: 18 to 36 months

- g** Show pleasure in new skills and in what they have done. **APL-1G**
- h** Discover things that interest and amaze them, and seek to share them with others. **APL-1H**
- i** Watch what others are doing and often try to participate. **APL-1I**

Younger Preschoolers: 36 to 48 months

- j** Communicate interest to others through verbal and nonverbal means (take teacher to the science center to see a new animal). **APL-1J**
- k** Discover things that interest and amaze them, and seek to share them with others. **APL-1K**
- l** Show interest in a growing range of topics, ideas, and tasks. **APL-1L**

Older Preschoolers: 48 to 60+ months

- m** Communicate interest to others through verbal and nonverbal means (take teacher to the science center to see a new animal). **APL-1M**
- n** Discover things that interest and amaze them, and seek to share them with others. **APL-1N**
- o** Show interest in a growing range of topics, ideas, and tasks. **APL-1O**
- p** Demonstrate interest in mastering new skills (e.g., writing name, riding a bike, dance moves, building skills). **APL-1P**

2 Children actively seek to understand the world around them. [APL-2](#)

Infants Birth to 12 months

- a Explore the indoor and outdoor environment using all available senses — smell, hear, see, feel, and taste. [APL-2A](#)
- b With appropriate supports, move toward interesting people, sounds, objects, and activities. [APL-2B](#)

Younger Toddlers 8 to 21 months

- c Initiate activities that interest them and try to get others involved. [APL-2C](#)
- d Use toys and other objects to make things happen (kick a ball, push a button on a toy). [APL-2D](#)
- e Move toward people and things that are new and/or interesting. [APL-2E](#)

Older Toddlers 18 to 36 months

- f Seek more information about people and their surroundings (“study” an object carefully, stare for long moments, become absorbed in figuring out a situation). [APL-2F](#)
- g Use their whole body to learn (get mud or paint on themselves from head to toe, fit themselves into a big, empty box). [APL-2G](#)
- h Communicate what they want to do or know using gestures, facial expressions, or words (ask “What dat?”). [APL-2H](#)

Younger Preschoolers 36 to 48 months

- i Ask questions about the people and things around them. [APL-2I](#)
- j Use all available senses, tools, and a variety of strategies to explore the environment (drop objects in water to see if they sink or float). [APL-2J](#)
- k Purposely try different ways of doing things to see what and how they work (adjust blocks used as a ramp to make a ball roll faster and farther). [APL-2K](#)

Older Preschoolers 48 to 60+ months

- l Ask questions to find out more about the things that interest them, including questions about future events. [APL-2L](#)
 - m Choose among different ways to explore the environment based on experience (use a magnifying glass that the class used before to explore something new). [APL-2M](#)
 - n Use what they know from experience to understand what is happening now (get an umbrella to go outside because it is raining). [APL-2N](#)
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Play and Imagination

3 Children engage in increasingly complex play. APL-3

Infants Birth to 12 months

- a Show interest in other children playing (watch, turn toward). APL-3A
- b Imitate sounds, facial expressions, or gestures (cover face with hands, hands up for “so big”). APL-3B
- c Play with simple objects, using them to make sounds and other interesting results. APL-3C
- d Begin to participate in give-and-take exchanges of sounds and gestures (“serve and return”). APL-3D

Younger Toddlers 8 to 21 months

- e Play alongside other children, sometimes imitating their actions. APL-3E
- f Imitate adult actions with objects, first with real objects and then with objects that are used to represent another object (talk on phone, feed doll, use a chair as pretend car). APL-3F
- g Take turns in simple games (pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo). APL-3G
- h Offer toys and objects to others. APL-3H

Older Toddlers 18 to 36 months

- i Try to involve other children in play. APL-3I
- j Make believe, pretend, and act out familiar life scenes, sometimes using objects to represent something else (a shoe becomes a phone). APL-3J
- k Play with others with a common purpose (play a chase game).
- l Communicate about what is happening during pretend play (“He eating,” point to a picture on a communication board when feeding a toy baby with a spoon; “Now go work,” after putting on shoes and necktie). APL-3L

Younger Preschoolers 36 to 48 months

- m Engage in dramatic play themes that include interacting with other children, but often are not coordinated. APL-3M
- n Talk to peers and share materials during play. APL-3N
- o Engage in make-believe play with imaginary objects. APL-3O
- p Use language to begin and carry on play with others. APL-3P
- q Express knowledge of their everyday lives and cultures through play (use chopsticks to eat, pretend to fix hair the way their family styles hair). APL-3Q

Older Preschoolers 48 to 60+ months

- r Develop and sustain more complex pretend play themes in cooperation with peers. APL-3R
- s Use more complex and varied language to share ideas and influence others during play. APL-3S
- t Choose to use new knowledge and skills during play (add features to dramatic play scene related to class project, write list, build structure like displayed

picture). [APL-3T](#)

- u** Demonstrate their cultural values and “rules” through play (tell another child, “That’s not what we eat for breakfast.”). [APL-3U](#)

4 Children demonstrate creativity, imagination, and inventiveness. [APL-4](#)

Infants Birth to 12 months

- a** Use everyday household objects for play (spoons, pots and pans, plastic bowls). [APL-4A](#)
- b** Try a familiar action with a new object or person (try to bounce a block, wave bye-bye to a toy, make a sound to get a new adult’s attention). [APL-4B](#)
- c** React to unexpected events with laughter and interest. [APL-4C](#)

Younger Toddlers 8 to 21 months

- d** Do new things with familiar objects or combine them in unusual ways (use a dress-up boa as a snake, pound a drum with a plastic bottle, try to stack bears). [APL-4D](#)
- e** Do new things with familiar objects or combine them in unusual ways (use a dress-up boa as a snake, pound a drum with a plastic bottle, try to stack bears). [APL-4E](#)
- f** Pretend to be somebody or something other than themselves. [APL-4F](#)
- g** Pretend one object is really something different (use Legos® as food while stirring a pot) [APL-4G](#)

Younger Preschoolers 36 to 48 months

- h** Offer new ideas about how to do or make things. [APL-4H](#)
- i** Add new actions, props, or dress-up items to pretend play. [APL-4I](#)
- j** Use materials (e.g., art materials, instruments, construction paper, writing implements) or actions to represent experiences or ideas in novel ways. [APL-4J](#)
- k** Experiment with language, musical sounds, and movement. [APL-4K](#)

Older Preschoolers 48 to 60+ months

- l** Plan play scenarios (dramatic play, construction), and use or create a variety of props or tools to enact them. [APL-4L](#)
 - m** Expand the variety of roles taken during dramatic play and add more actions, language, or props to enact roles. [APL-4M](#)
 - n** Use materials or actions in increasingly varied and resourceful ways to represent experiences or ideas. [APL-4N](#)
 - o** Make up stories, songs, or dances for fun during play. [APL-4O](#)
 - p** Invent new games. [APL-4P](#)
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Risk-Taking, Problem-Solving, and Flexibility

5 Children are willing to try new and challenging experiences. [APL-5](#)

Infants Birth to 12 months

- a Explore new experiences both indoors and outdoors (toys, foods, people, spaces) with support of a familiar trusted adult. [APL-5A](#)
- b Try to do things that are hard for them (stretch to reach toy, work to crawl or walk, try to capture tiny crumb with pincer grasp). [APL-5B](#)
- c Look to adult for cues and, when reassured, proceed. [APL-5C](#)

Younger Toddlers 8 to 21 months

- d Try unfamiliar experiences and interact with new people with a familiar adult nearby. [APL-5D](#)
- e Move away from a familiar adult to explore, but check in frequently. [APL-5E](#)
- f Show interest in and try to operate toys that offer a challenge. [APL-5F](#)

Older Toddlers 18 to 36 months

- g Explore freely without a familiar adult nearby. [APL-5G](#)
- h Try out new skills in a familiar environment (learn to climb steps and then try to climb ladder to the slide). [APL-5H](#)
- i Approach a challenge with confidence (try to lift a heavy object, work on a difficult puzzle, “I can do it.”). [APL-5I](#)
- j Want to do things their own way (say “Me do it!”, push an adult’s hand away if the person is trying to help). [APL-5J](#)

Younger Preschoolers 36 to 48 months

- k Express a belief that they can do things that are hard. [APL-5K](#)
- l Choose to participate in an increasing variety of familiar and new experiences. [APL-5L](#)
- m Accept new challenges when offered. [APL-5M](#)
- n Try things they are not sure they can do, while avoiding dangerous risks. [APL-5N](#)

Older Preschoolers 48 to 60+ months

- o Express a belief that they can do things that are hard. [APL-5O](#)
- p Approach new experiences independently. [APL-5P](#)
- q Ask to participate in new experiences that they have observed or heard about. [APL-5Q](#)
- r Independently seek new challenges. [APL-5R](#)

6 Children use a variety of strategies to solve problems. APL-6

Infants Birth to 12 months

- a** Try one or two strategies to get what they want (make noise, move or reach toward things, reject unwanted item). APL-6A
- b** Try a familiar action in a new activity (hit a button on a new toy, try to open a visitor's purse). APL-6B
- c** Use trial and error to get something done, get what they want, or solve simple problems. APL-6C

Younger Toddlers 8 to 21 months

- d** Try one or two strategies to get what they want or solve a problem (try giving a peer an alternate toy to get a toy from him/her; try to put a ball in a box—if it will not fit, get a bigger box). APL-6D
- e** Use available resources to accomplish a goal or solve a problem (push a stool to a counter to reach for something). APL-6E
- f** After unsuccessful attempts to solve a problem, ask for help from an adult (point, gesture, speak). APL-6F
- g** Vary actions on purpose to solve a problem (when fitting a shape into a shape sorter, turn the shape to fit; when opening a drawer, shake, then pull its handle). APL-6G

Older Toddlers 18 to 36 months

- h** Try a variety of strategies to get what they want or solve a problem. APL-6H
- i** Use language to obtain help to solve a problem (tell adults, "My car broke."). APL-6I
- j** Use materials in new ways to explore and solve problems (bring a big spoon to the sand table when all of the shovels are in use, pile blocks on a towel and drag them across the floor when there are too many to carry). APL-6J

Younger Preschoolers 36 to 48 months

- k** Seek and make use of ideas and help from adults and peers to solve problems ("How can I make this paint get off my pants?"). APL-6K
- l** Purposefully use a variety of strategies to solve different types of problems. APL-6L
- m** Talk to themselves to work through the steps to solve a problem. APL-6M

Older Preschoolers 48 to 60+ months

- n** Seek and make use of ideas and help from adults and peers to solve problems ("How can I make this paint get off my pants?"). APL-6N
 - o** Describe the steps they will use to solve a problem. APL-6O
 - p** Evaluate different strategies for solving a problem and select the strategy they feel will work without having to try it. APL-6P
 - q** Explain how they solved a problem to another person. APL-6Q
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Attentiveness, Effort and Persistence

7 Children demonstrate initiative. [APL-7](#)

Infants Birth to 12 months

- a Communicate with sounds or movements to indicate preferences (make excited sound for food they like, push away food they don't like). [APL-7A](#)
- b Independently explore the different qualities of an object (notice the sound of a rattle, then be drawn to the "feel" of it, exploring it with mouth or hand). [APL-7B](#)

Younger Toddlers 8 to 21 months

- c Express choices with actions or simple language (choose Cheerios® or a cracker). [APL-7C](#)
- d Seek to repeat experiences they enjoy or succeed at (do shape sorter over and over, climb up and down stairs). [APL-7D](#)

Older Toddlers 18 to 36 months

- e Select and carry out activities (choose to set the table; gather play dishes and food, and then feed the dolls). [APL-7E](#)
- f Show increasing interest in performing tasks independently (put on jacket and try to zip it up). [APL-7F](#)
- g Show and/or tell others what they have done. [APL-7G](#)

Younger Preschoolers 36 to 48 months

- h Show increasing independence and purpose when making choices ("I want to go to blocks."). [APL-7H](#)
- i Express goals or plans and follow through on them ("I'm going to draw my house."). [APL-7I](#)
- j Make decisions about materials needed to carry out a task. [APL-7J](#)

Older Preschoolers 48 to 60+ months

- k Show increasing independence and purpose when making choices ("I'm going to the block area to make a track for my race car."). [APL-7K](#)
- l Independently identify and seek things they need to complete activities or tasks (gather supplies and make a birthday card with a message). [APL-7L](#)
- m Set simple goals that extend over time, make plans and follow through ("Let's make a rocket ship. We need blocks."). [APL-7M](#)

8 Children maintain attentiveness and focus. APL-8

Infants Birth to 12 months

- a Focus and attend to people and things around them. APL-8A
- b Repeat interesting actions over and over (push button to make toy pop up). APL-8B
- c Notice when the expected does not happen. APL-8C

Younger Toddlers 8 to 21 months

- d Focus on selfselected activity for a short period of time (decide to play in the sandbox and stay there for a couple of minutes). APL-8D
- e Focus on an interesting activity or interaction shared with adults for a short period of time. APL-8E

Older Toddlers 18 to 36 months

- f Focus on a person or a hands-on activity for a short period of time (participate in singing a song, stay focused long enough to build a block tower). APL-8F
- g Keep working on interesting activities with other things going on around them. APL-8G

Younger Preschoolers 36 to 48 months

- h Focus on ageappropriate activities for a short period of time, even with interruptions (continue working on a puzzle even though another child sitting nearby is laughing and talking). APL-8H
- i Remain engaged in more complex activities that they have chosen. APL-8I
- j Maintain focus and return to an activity after a break. APL-8J

Older Preschoolers 48 to 60+ months

- k Sometimes able to focus on what is relevant to a task (sort multicolored wooden beads by shape). APL-8K
- l Consistently remain engaged in selfdirected activities. APL-8L
- m Shift attention back to a task after having been diverted from it. APL-8M

9 Children persist in challenging activities. APL-9

Infants Birth to 12 months

- a** Try over and over to make things happen (make sounds to get attention, work to get to something that is out of reach). APL-9A

Younger Toddlers 8 to 21 months

- b** Keep trying to accomplish tasks that they are not able to do immediately (put on a jacket, engage a busy adult in play). APL-9B

Older Toddlers 18 to 36 months

- c** Seek help from others to complete a challenging activity. APL-9C
- d** Keep working on an activity even after setbacks (block structure collapses, puzzle piece does not fit). APL-9D

Younger Preschoolers 36 to 48 months

- e** Seek help from others to complete a challenging activity (ask a teacher for help putting a puzzle away on a high shelf; ask a friend for help in naming an unfamiliar animal in a picture). APL-9E
- f** When something does not work, try different ways to complete the task (when a block tower falls, try putting the blocks together in a different way to build the tower again). APL-9F
- g** Keep working to complete tasks, including those that are somewhat difficult. APL-9G

Older Preschoolers 48 to 60+ months

- h** Seek help from others to complete a challenging activity (ask a teacher for help putting a puzzle away on a high shelf; ask a friend for help in naming an unfamiliar animal in a picture). APL-9H
- i** When something does not work, try different ways to complete the task (when a block tower falls, try putting the blocks together in a different way to build the tower again). APL-9I
- j** Plan and follow through on longer-term tasks (planting a seed and caring for the plant). APL-9J
- k** Keep trying until a challenging activity is complete despite distractions or interruptions (multi-piece puzzle started before lunch and completed later). APL-9K