At small-group time, J. tells his teacher, "Look Michelle, I painted these too."
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This guide includes the entire Preschool Child Observation Record (COR) assessment tool plus an explanatory discussion and examples for each COR item. It is designed to help you interpret and score your anecdotal notes on children’s behavior to create an accurate, useful, objective, and comprehensive developmental profile for each child.

The 32 Preschool COR items presented and described here cover key dimensions of child development in the following six COR categories: initiative; social relations; creative representation; music and movement; language and literacy; and mathematics and science. A page is devoted to each of the 32 COR items; it provides a developmental sequence for that item broken into five levels of behavior. Brief explanations are given for each item and level, followed by two or more examples of child anecdotes per level. This material will enable you to choose the COR item and level that best fit the behavior you have captured in each child anecdote or portfolio item. (Portfolio items may include children’s creations, writing samples, photos, videotapes, and audiotapes that you have collected as samples of children’s work.) In addition to illustrating the COR behavior levels, the examples provide models of the objective, specific notes that are most effective for documenting children’s progress with the Preschool COR system. (For instructions for anecdotal note taking see the COR User Guide.)

For more information on the child development framework that is the basis for the Preschool COR’s developmental sequences see Educating Young Children: Active Learning Practices for Preschool and Child Care Programs, Second Edition, by Mary Hohmann and David P. Weikart (2002), available from High/Scope Press. Because the Preschool COR was developed in conjunction with the High/Scope educational approach (the curriculum described in Educating Young Children), the COR is well-suited for assessment in programs using this approach. However, since the COR is based on widely accepted views of child development and learning, it can be used for assessment in any developmentally oriented early childhood program, regardless of the program’s curriculum.

A few words of explanation are needed to help you to make the best use of the behavior levels for each item and the examples of developmental anecdotes provided. First, unless otherwise indicated, the COR levels are written with the assumption of correctness. That is, if the item level reads “Child uses a position word,” this means that the child must use the word correctly to be scored at that level. If it is not necessary for the child to accomplish the task or behavior correctly, this will be explicitly stated in the level statement itself or in the accompanying
notes. Keep in mind, too, that the examples provided often describe more than one child, although the anecdote usually “belongs” to just one child. In most cases the wording of the example will make it obvious which child is intended as the focus of the anecdote. In items where this may ambiguous, the focus child is indicated in brackets after the example. If all the children in the example are doing the same thing, as in some social play examples, you can assume that the example might be entered in all of their individual records. For further guidance in using this manual as you write anecdotes and complete the COR assessment process, see the Preschool COR User Guide.
By nature young children are inquisitive, enterprising, and motivated to take action to pursue their interests and ideas. Through everyday choices, plans, and decisions, children initiate personally meaningful activities that enable them to learn not only about the physical world but also about themselves and others as learners and adventurers. By acting on these initiatives, children gain confidence in themselves as capable persons and in others as supportive participants. As children develop over time, they strengthen their abilities to communicate their intentions, solve problems that occur in their own activities, and coordinate their ideas and activities with others.
As active learners, children constantly make choices, decisions, and plans. As children develop, they progress from making (with some adult prompting) very simple choices and plans to making more specific and complex plans describing what they want to do.

**Level 1. Child indicates a choice by pointing or some other action.**

The child expresses choices, decisions, and plans through simple actions, such as pointing, going and getting an object, or just starting an activity with no prompt.

- 12/1 At planning time, when asked what he is going to do at work time, Dylan points to the puzzles.
- 2/5 During work time in the block area, Carlos asks Mark what he is going to put on top of the boat. Mark goes to the shelf, picks up the tub of cars, and brings it back to the boat.

**Level 2. Child expresses a choice in one or two words.**

The child states a choice or plan by using a word or a short phrase. The child may state this plan in response to adult prompting, as long as the adult has asked an open-ended question (“What will you do in the art area?”) rather than a yes-no question (“Do you want to color?”).

- 11/19 During planning time when her teacher asks her what she will use at work time, Cayli answers, “Pegs.”
- 11/3 At snack, Shayna points and says the word “Milk,” indicating that she wants more milk.

**Level 3. Child expresses a choice with a short sentence.**

The child expresses a choice or plan in a short sentence, adding no details about how the plan will be carried out. If the child just identifies the play activity (“I’m going to play with the truck”) without adding any more elements (such as the location or additional materials to be used), this is considered a level 3 plan. A plan that flits from place to place, such as “I’m going to the house area, and then to the art area, and then to the book area, and then...” should be scored at this level, because it includes no details about what the child will actually do.

- 10/2 At planning time Scott says, “I’m gonna play with the garage.”
- 12/2 At small-group time, when he is finished with the stamp pads and stamps, Jacob says, “I’m going to put my paper in my backpack.”

**Level 4. Child makes a plan with one or two details.**

At this level the child is able to add a bit more detail to a plan. This might include specifying a play location, a playmate, or the toys or materials to be used. If the child just says where he or she will play, this is not sufficient and should be scored as a 3 rather than a 4.

- 2/4 At planning time Pauline says, “I’m going to work in the block area with the fire truck.”
- 10/18 During work time, Taylor tells Ms. Kay, “Now I’m going to play spaceship with Devon and Dante.”

**Level 5. Child makes a plan with three or more details.**

The child makes complex plans and describes in some detail what will be used and how the plans will be accomplished. For a level 5 score the child’s plan must include at least three elements: for example, identifying the play activity and two materials to be used or naming the activity, the location, and two playmates.

- 5/20 During planning time Jalen tells his teacher, “I’m going to paint my mom a picture of our new truck and I’m gonna use two brushes and the green paint.”
- 3/19 At planning time Chloe says, “I want to be a bride. So I’m going to dress up in the house area and get those sparkly shoes, and carry the big yellow flowers.”
Level 1. Child expresses frustration when encountering a problem with materials.

At this level a child who is having problems with materials typically expresses frustration either with an action (throwing materials on the floor, stomping feet, knocking the rest of the blocks over) or a vocal outburst (crying, screaming, sighing, huffing, making other kinds of angry sounds).

- 9/27 At work time in the toy area, Asia cries when she cannot fit pieces into the puzzle.
- 11/15 As Holly gets ready to go outside, her zipper gets stuck, and she throws her coat on the floor.

Level 2. Child identifies a problem with materials and asks for help.

To be assigned a level 2, the child must identify the problem either stating it aloud (“I can’t get this out!”) or by responding to an adult’s prompt (e.g., Adult asks, “Sammy, what’s wrong?” and the child then asks for help).

- 12/4 At work time in the house area, Carol says, “I want to wear the apron. Nancy [the teacher], will you tie it on me?”
- 10/24 Outside, while trying to get on the higher swing, Jayleen says, “I can’t get it. Teacher, will you help me up?”

Level 3. Child tries one way to solve a problem with materials.

The child tries one method to solve a problem but does not have to be successful to be assigned to this level. If the child uses the same method over and over again, this is still assigned a level 3.

- 2/10 During work time in the art area, Abigail hits the top of the play dough bowl several times, trying to get the lid off.
- 1/7 At small-group time, working with puzzles, Joey turns the pieces around until they fit into the puzzle.
- 3/19 At snack time Brett says, “I can’t find my fork. Where is it?” He looks under the table and cannot find it.

Level 4. Child tries two ways to solve a problem with materials.

The child tries two different methods to solve a problem. As with level 3, the child’s attempts do not have to be successful. A child may also begin with one method, try it repeatedly (as in level 3), and then try another method (successfully or unsuccessfully).

- 9/22 During work time in the art area, Abigail hits the top of the play dough bowl several times, then tries to pull up on the lid of the bowl to get it off.
- 10/21 At lunch Sara tries to open her milk carton with her fingers. When she can’t, she gets scissors to try and open it.
- 11/31 During small-group, Sam tries to tear off a piece of tape and is unsuccessful. He asks another child to hold the tape down as he tears it from the tape dispenser.

Level 5. Child tries three or more ways to solve a problem with materials.

The child is highly involved and persistent, devoting time and effort to trying to solve a problem. The child must try at least three or more methods to solve the problem. Although the child often will succeed, success is not necessary for this level.

- 4/07 During work time in the art area, Abigail hits the top of the play dough bowl several times, pulls up on the lid, goes to the house area and uses a spatula to try to pry it off, and then asks Dalane to do it for her.
- 9/16 At snack Alicia wants to sit next to Jada. She pushes her chair toward Jada’s seat and is blocked by another child. Alicia turns the chair in several different directions but is unable to squeeze past. Then she picks up the chair and carries it all the way around the table to sit next to Jada on the other side.
- 10/17 During work time in the house area, Phuoc tries to pull a car mat out from behind the mirror. When the mirror begins to fall, Phuoc stops pulling on the mat. He puts the mat down, lifts the mirror out of the way, and continues to pull the mat into the block area, where it gets stuck between two shelves. He then goes behind the mat and pushes it through to the block area.
Level 1. Child engages in exploratory play.
Children at this level are simply exploring the properties and functions of materials and tools, particularly those that are unfamiliar. To an observer, the play appears to have no clear purpose.
- 9/30 At work time in the toy area, George fills and empties a bucket with sand.
- 9/21 At work time in the art area, Joan uses a brush to spread paint all over a large sheet of paper.

Level 2. Child makes something with materials.
The child has a specific idea about what to make with the materials or how to use the tools. The child does not have to say what he or she has made.
- 9/27 At small-group time Fiona rolls play dough out into a long string and loops it back together so the ends connect.
- 9/15 At work time in the block area, Christian stacks four blocks and says, “Look, I made my house.”

Level 3. Child engages in pretend play.
The child, acting alone, assumes pretend roles and acts out his or her own scenarios.
- 10/21 At work time in the house area, Toran pretends to talk on the telephone to his mom.
- 12/3 At outside time Tara stands on the climber, wearing a firefighter hat. She holds out both arms, making spraying noises as if putting out a fire.

Level 4. During play with other children, child adds an idea that modifies the play.
The child plays with others and initiates an idea that changes the play in some way.
- 4/9 During work time several children are in the block area, building with all the big blocks. Bailey gets beads and pine cones, places them on different levels of the blocks, and says, “These are our windows for the tower.”
- 12/15 At work time in the house area, several children are baking “pizzas.” Tina brings the button bin to the table, saying “Hey guys, this can be the money. You buy the pizzas, and I’ll be the worker.”
- 11/15 At work time at the sand table, DeAnthony, José, and B. J. are building roads. DeAnthony adds a pail of water and yells, “We got rivers, let’s go get the boats!”

Level 5. Child joins with other children in playing a game with rules.
The child engages with other children in conventional games such as cards, board games, hide-and-seek, catch, and/or invented games in which they establish their own rules.
- 4/6 Outside, a teacher joins Ebony and Jennifer, who are running away from Ebony’s “uncle.” Jennifer tells Ebony, “You have to run ’cause he’s the monster. If he catches you, you gotta stay in the tire until we get you free.” [Jennifer’s anecdote]
- 5/6 At work time in the toy area, Ella joins Josh and another boy, who are passing out the cards that go with the Memory game. Josh tells Ella, “You have to find the mouse card to win.” [Josh’s anecdote]
Level 1. Child observes as others do a self-care activity.
The child watches and/or follows others in a self-care activity, such as washing hands, using the toilet or potty, or dressing.
• 10/6 During breakfast, Brianna watches the other children getting forks, spoons, and napkins for themselves.
• 11/2 After lunch, Felicia walks into the bathroom with Ben and watches him brush his teeth.

Level 2. Child accomplishes some parts of a self-care activity.
The child participates in some part of a self-care activity but needs a reminder to complete the whole process.
• 1/10 Before breakfast, Mack washes his hands with water. Rosie [an adult] reminds him to use the soap.
• 2/9 While getting ready to go outside, Lauren puts on her own mittens and hat. Sue [her teacher] helps her zip her coat.

The child is able to complete the entire self-care activity.
• 4/30 After lunch, Tahj uses the toilet, flushes, pulls up his pants, buttons them, and washes his hands.
• 1/17 When it is time to go outside, Felipe puts on his own snowpants, boots, hat, jacket, and mittens, and waits for the parent volunteer to start his zipper so he can finish zipping and go outside.

Level 4. Child identifies the need for a tool and uses it independently to accomplish a personal goal.
The child decides to use a tool (scissors, a stapler, a hammer, a broom, a shovel, etc.) to achieve a goal. The idea comes from the child, and the tool is not part of a group project.
• 2/16 At work time in the house area, Catherine uses dried rice to pretend to cook. When she spills some on the floor, she gets the mini-broom and dustpan and sweeps it up.
• 4/5 At small-group time in the art area, Parvin uses a paper towel tube to retrieve an eraser that she has dropped between two shelves.

Level 5. Child helps another child in a self-care activity or program routine.
The child offers to help another child complete a self-care activity or take part in a program routine. This does not include passing out any material to be used for an activity, such as passing out scissors for an art activity or passing out napkins at snack.
• 3/7 At work time in the house area, Yasmine helps Anna zip up her dress.
• 12/14 During small-group, after painting, Amber turns on the faucet for Megan, whose hands are covered with paint.
By forming social relationships with peers and adults, young children develop profoundly important social skills and coping strategies that will sustain them for life. Preschoolers are actively seeking others to watch, play next to, imitate, talk to, and play with. They make choices and decisions about whom they want to be with, often initiating actions with others to carry out their plans. Through these early social experiences children develop the building blocks of human relationships (trust, autonomy, initiative, self-regulation, empathy, and self-esteem) and form constructive ideas about themselves and others. By providing a supportive social climate, adults give children the freedom to pursue their inclinations to interact with people and materials—interactions that generate opportunities for social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, aesthetic, musical, and physical learning experiences.
Level 1. Child participates in a conversation initiated by a familiar adult.

At this level the teacher or other familiar adult engages the child in a conversation (one or two exchanges). The child may respond verbally or nonverbally.

- 3/4 While Midori is taking her coat off after arriving, Gail [her teacher] says, “Your new coat has lots of colors on it.” Midori nods.
- 10/5 At work time in the toy area, Kia plays the matching shoe game on the computer. Joe, her teacher tells her, “You matched the small shoes to the small person.” Kia replies, “And I matched this one, too,” as she points to the screen.
- 10/21 When Trevor arrives, Beth [his teacher] says, “I hear you went to the dentist after school yesterday.” Trevor says, “Yep, and I got a sticker!” and shows it to her.

Level 2. Child participates in a conversation initiated by an unfamiliar adult.

The child responds (verbally or nonverbally) when an unfamiliar adult initiates a conversation (one or two exchanges).

- 11/3 At the beginning of the day, Kay [the substitute teacher] tells Phil, “My name is Kay and I’m a teacher today because Rosie is sick. Can you put on your nametag so I can learn your name?” Phil replies, “I’m Phil and I am four years old.”
- 5/12 On a walk to the park, a neighbor asks, “Are you going for a walk?” Jason tells him, “We’re going to the park!” The neighbor replies, “It’s a good day for it!”

Level 3. Child initiates an interaction with an adult.

The child initiates a conversation or another kind of interaction with an adult, regardless of whether the adult is familiar to the child.

- 11/2 At work time, as Zongping [the teacher] walks by the house area, Nina says, “I made a pancake for you, a big pancake!”
- 9/20 During lunch time Jared tells Fioni [the lunch lady], “My mom let me bring my umbrella ‘cos it’s raining.”


At this level the child sustains an interaction with an adult (verbally or nonverbally) for an extended period of time. It is not necessary for the child to have initiated the interaction. To be scored at this level, a conversation should have five or more exchanges.

- 12/19 At work time in the art area, Renee and Sara [her teacher] are working with the clay. Renee says, “We’re making a pizza. You make the big part and I’ll make the cheese.” Sara starts to flatten the big piece of clay and says to Renee, “Please pass me the rolling pin.” Renee does. Renee reaches for the clay and takes small bits and sprinkles them on the flat piece Sara made. Sara asks, “Do you want anything else?” Renee replies, “Pepperoni—a lot of it.”
- 4/29 Outside, while they are digging in the sandbox, Jerry tells Shannon [his teacher] about his vacation—how they drove “forever” to see his cousins, that he got to sleep on the couch, and that they saw the tall buildings. Shannon tells him about her trip to the city to see a baseball game. They continue to talk about their vacations until Jerry’s mom comes to get him.

Level 5. Child involves an adult in an activity and sustains the involvement.

The child involves the adult in her or his activity. The child and adult play together as partners for an extended period of time.

- 10/5 At outside time in the sand pit, Jamie has been building a “city.” She calls Nick [her teacher] over to start clearing space for the roads. They work together to build “roads” and “train stations” for most of outside time.
- 12/15 During work time in the house area, Maddie asks Beth [her teacher] to come to her “feast.” Maddie and others cook and serve pretend food, and Maddie then takes Beth’s hands and tells her it is time for the ball. First, they get dressed. Maddie picks out beads for Beth to wear, and Beth helps Maddie get into her purple lace “princess dress.” Then they dance.
Level 1. Child responds when another child initiates an interaction.
The child responds verbally or nonverbally when another child starts the exchange.
• 1/15 At work time in the toy area, when Samantha says that she needs another bead, Trey responds with “Here one” and hands her a bead. [Trey’s anecdote]
• 10/15 During the transition to small group, when a classmate calls to Jared, “Sit by me!” Jared sits next to him.

Level 2. Child initiates an interaction with another child.
The child at this level is able to initiate (verbally or nonverbally) conversation or another exchange with another child.
• 3/19 At greeting time Haydon hands Maria a puzzle piece to put in his puzzle.
• 2/15 At large group, Joey tells Haley, “Hey Haley, you sat by Marquise and I did, too.”

Level 3. Child sustains an interaction with another child.
The child interacts (verbally or nonverbally) with another child for an extended period of time. A conversation at this level consists of five or more exchanges.
• 4/15 At cleanup time in the house area, Beth and Dawn carry a tub of dishes and silverware to the shelf and put them away together. [Beth or Dawn’s anecdote]
• 4/28 At work time in the house area, Patricia [the teacher] takes out the cups and asks Anthony, “Are you thirsty? You need a drink?” Anthony says he is thirsty for chocolate milk. Ari says, “We don’t have chocolate milk.” Anthony and Ari then discuss what they like to drink and don’t like to drink, with Ari stating, “I hate that nasty juice that my Mama drinks” and Anthony concluding, “Chocolate milk is my best one.” [Anthony or Ari’s anecdote]

Level 4. Child invites another child to play.
The child makes a decision about whom he or she wants to play with. Inviting another child to play is evidence that the child recognizes it can sometimes be more fun to have a playmate than to play alone.
• 5/13 At work time in the block area, Brooklyn says to Joy, “Come sit on my bus. I’m driving the kids to school.”
• 4/25 During greeting time, Hannah asks Kate, “You want to go read with me?”

Level 5. Child shows loyalty to another child.
This level applies when the child demonstrates friendship and support to another child over time. For example, a child might regularly save a spot for a friend next to him or her at the table or on the floor; two children might repeatedly make plans to play together during work time; two children might play together during outside time several days in a row; or a child might express disappointment at a classmate’s absence.
• 6/1 At small-group time Miranda saves the seat next to her for Ruth. She also does this at planning time and at snack time.
• 7/7 Outside, when B. J. goes inside to use the bathroom, Asia waits by the school door until he comes back out. Then they run to continue their play under the climber. [Asia’s anecdote]
• 8/4 For over a week, Bo and Allen plan every day to work on the “space station and space ships and aliens” that they are making, using most of the Legos and some of the really small blocks.
Level 1. In a conflict with another child, child responds with yelling or physical action.

At this level the child responds vocally (yells or screams “That’s mine” or “I had it first”) or physically (hits, kicks, grabs) when in conflict with another child.

- 2/3 At work time at the sand table, Brenda screams, “No, I had it first!” when Aziz takes the funnel from her.
- 12/14 During cleanup time, Pavel hits Sammie with a soft block when Sammie tries to take a block away from him.

Level 2. Child requests adult help in resolving a conflict with another child.

During a conflict the child seeks out an adult to help resolve the problem.

- 10/26 During small group, Tamara tells Ellis [her teacher], “Dali won’t share!” when Dali won’t give her any small cars.
- 2/14 At work time in the toy area, Ignacio tells Natalie [her teacher], “She keeps taking my peoples and won’t stop.”

Level 3. Child identifies the problem in a conflict with another child.

At this level a child involved in a conflict verbalizes the problem that he or she is having with another child. If an adult is present, the child’s recognition of the problem may result from a nondirective adult prompt, such as “Can you tell me what the problem is?” However, if the child identifies the problem after the adult asks a leading question, such as “Look, Charlie is crying. Margaret, what did you do to make Charlie cry?” the child’s response would not quality for this level.

- 9/25 At work time in the book area, when both Jack and Daniel reach for the same book, Daniel says, “Oh brother, now what are we going to do? Who’s gonna get the book first?”
- 3/4 At work time in the house area, when Chelsea and Connor both want to play with the brown teddy bear, Chelsea says, “Both of us want to use the same teddy.”

Level 4. With adult help, child offers a solution to a conflict.

One of the children involved in a conflict provides a solution to a conflict with prompting or other support from an adult.

- 3/6 At greeting time, Bert and Heather are arguing over a chalk eraser. Sam [their teacher] holds the eraser, asking the children, “What can we do about this problem?” Bert says, “She can get another one!” Heather replies, “I want this one!” [Bert’s anecdote]
- 8/2 Outside, Hon and Peaches want the same bike. Karen [their teacher] asks them for their ideas about how to solve the problem. Hon says that somebody [meaning herself] could use the bike and the other person could watch.

Level 5. Child negotiates the resolution of a conflict with another child.

At this level children act as their own arbitrators to resolve a dispute, offering possible resolutions to their conflict without any help from the adults.

- 3/24 At work time in the art area, Serena wants to paint and so does Sam. When Sam takes the big piece of heavy paper that Serena also wants, Serena suggests, “We can paint on this big piece together!” They then paint together on the same paper. [Serena’s anecdote]
- 3/30 At work time in the house area, Jesus and Gus both want to use the same camera, and they tug at it together for a few moments. Then Gus suggests that he use the camera to take a picture of Jesus. Jesus agrees, and their play continues. [Gus’s anecdote]
H. Understanding and expressing feelings

Level 1. Child expresses an emotion.
Without using words, the child exhibits a positive or negative emotion, such as anger, happiness, sadness, grief, envy, awe, joy, or frustration.

- 3/28 Outside, digging in the sandbox, Nathan cries when Diana throws sand on him.
- 1/30 At greeting time, when singing the “Getting to Know You” song, Serena smiles and jumps up as the group sings her name.

Level 2. Child comforts another child.
The child offers comfort (patting, hugging, kissing, giving something to a child) to another child who is hurt or in distress.

- 2/15 At greeting time Cody hugs Blake when he cries after his mom leaves.
- 4/13 At work time in the house area, Earl brings Emily her blanket when she trips and cries.

Level 3. Child talks about an emotion.
The child uses words to express or describe an emotion. (“I’m mad at you!” “I’m happy you sat by me!” “Teacher, Molly is sad and crying.”) This level applies whether the child is talking about his or her own emotion or someone else’s.

- 10/21 At work time in the house area, Nolan tells Andrew, “I’m mad—don’t take my truck!”
- 12/16 When Mariah’s grandma arrives to pick her up at the end of the day, Mariah hugs her and says, “I’m so happy you came to get me!”
- 9/16 During snack, Willis turns to his friend Max and says, “Are you excited about coming over to my house?”

Level 4. Child represents an emotion through pretend play or art.
The child portrays an emotion while enacting a pretend role or describing something he or she has made.

- 2/5 At work time in the house area, Timothy pretends to be sad because his pretend dog dies. He cries and rubs his eyes.
- 11/12 During work time Victoria describes her drawing to the teacher. She says, “This is me and I’m really happy!”

Level 5. Child identifies an emotion and gives a reason for it.
For this level to apply, the child must verbalize an emotion and then give a reason for it (“Sari is sad today because she misses her mommy”).

- 5/5 At greeting time Rachel tells Phakama, “Last night I heard a thunderstorm, and I cried because I was scared.”
- 3/13 At arrival Jameka tells the bus aide, “I’m happy because I’m going to Granddaddy’s Wal-Mart and then to the big school.”
Representation is the process in which one thing is used to stand for (or represent) another. When we use pictures, models, images, symbols, and language, we are using representation. Preschoolers are just beginning to represent. Representational experiences are important for children because they lay the foundation for adult thinking skills. The abilities involved in representation are used by adults to solve problems, to think creatively, and to communicate with others.
Level 1. Child uses clay, dough, paper, blocks, sand, wire, pipe cleaners, or scrap materials.
Through exploration, children gain a working idea of the properties of model-making materials and how they change when rolled, twisted, squeezed, flattened, stretched, crumbled, smoothed out, stacked, lined up, and so forth.
• 12/6 During small-group time, Kimberly twists the pipe cleaners around her fingers.
• 3/22 At work time in the art area, Liz stands at the art table and rips tissue paper into a big pile.

Level 2. Child notices and says that a material looks like something else.
In the process of working with modeling materials, the child sees a connection between how he or she has shaped or arranged the material and its resemblance to an actual object.
• 1/2 During work time in the house area, Gabby flattens clay and says, “Hey look, I made a pancake!”
• 2/15 As he is getting ready to leave for the day, Isaiah points to his painting and says to the teacher, “It looks like the sun.”

Level 3. Child uses sounds, actions, or words to show what a material stands for.
At this level the child intentionally uses modeling materials to make a representation of something.
• 2/25 During work time in the block area, Pablo builds a block structure and climbs on it and makes engine noises.
• 3/12 At planning time Jordy looks through a paper towel tube and says, “Ms. Shannon, I see you!”

Level 4. Child makes a model with three or more basic parts.
By now the child understands that a model includes several distinct parts. Sitting on a large hollow block and calling it a car, for example, does not meet the criteria for this level. Instead, the child must include recognizable, though rudimentary, parts for the model, such as another block for a seat, something to hold for a steering wheel, and blocks for the gas and brake pedals.
• 10/13 During work time Donny and Marcus build a boat in the block area with the large wooden blocks. It has a steering wheel, paddles, and seats.
• 11/6 During work time in the toy area, David uses the Duplos to build a house with a door, two windows, and roof.

Level 5. Child makes a model with details on one or more of the basic parts.
At this level the child understands that the parts of objects have subparts. He or she expresses this understanding by adding details to models such as handles on doors, hands on arms, fingers on hands, fingernails on fingers, and so forth.
• 4/12 During work time in the art area, Juan glues scrap boxes together to create his “dog.” He uses Pringles potato chip cans for the legs and small soap boxes for the “paws,” and draws claws on the paws with a marker. He adds a pipe cleaner around its neck and uses foil to make “the tags for if he gets lost.” Then he glues strips of paper—“my dog’s tail”—on the end of his model.
• 5/2 During small-group time, Evan makes a play dough person that includes a head, neck, body, arms, hands, legs, and feet. The eyes have eyelashes and eyebrows. The hands and feet include fingers and toes.
• 5/12 At work time in the block area, Graciella uses the large blocks to build a car with a front seat and a back seat. She uses a plate for the steering wheel and tapes a round sponge to the middle of the plate for the “horn.” She then gets a scarf, loops it around the block, and calls it her “seat belt for safety.” She uses a clip from the easel for the “locker thing that keeps the seat belt on tight.”
Level 1. Child uses a marker, crayon, pencil, chalk, paint, or finger paint.

The child uses drawing and painting tools and materials in basic ways: exploring their properties and functions. For example, the child finds out how chalk or paint spreads or smears, and how crayons, brushes, or markers make different kinds of marks depending on how they are held and the amount of pressure applied.

- 9/17 During work time in the book area, Yuri uses chalk to cover part of the chalkboard.
- 11/6 During small-group time, Zack uses a pencil and crayon, one in each hand, to make marks on paper.

Level 2. When drawing or painting, child notices an unintended result and says what it looks like.

A child who is painting or drawing stops to examine what he or she has done so far and is struck by the picture’s resemblance to an actual object. The child may then continue to paint or draw, frequently painting or drawing over the part just noted.

- 3/25 At work time in the art area, while drawing circles over and over, Midori stops and says, “Look, I’m making chicken pops!”
- 3/16 At work time at the easel, Saul paints with blue swirls and says, “It looks like the clouds in the sky.”

Level 3. Child draws or paints something and explains what it stands for.

The child has an image or scene in mind and paints or draws it in “broad strokes.” The picture may or may not be recognizable to others. To complete the picture or make it clearer to others, he or she uses words to fill in the telling details.

- 5/23 During work time in the art area, Mateo paints a rainbow shape and a figure underneath and says, “Look, it is a fighting man.”
- 2/13 During small-group time, Alana draws a circular shape with lines coming from it and tells Ms. Pat, “It’s a spider.”

Level 4. Child draws or paints a picture that includes four or more basic parts.

The child draws or paints objects and people that include distinguishing parts. For example, a person has a head, a body, arms, and legs; a vehicle has a body and wheels or treads; a building has features like a roof, a door, or a window. A repetition of a specific part (like two ears or several windows) counts as one part.

- 11/28 At work time in the art area, Mitchell draws a face with a mouth, two eyes, a nose, and hair.
- 11/15 During small-group time, Tina draws a house-like structure with items resembling a door, four windows, a roof, and a chimney.

Level 5. Child draws or paints a picture with details on one or more of the basic parts.

The child is able to draw or paint parts and subparts of objects. For example, he or she adds branches, leaves, flowers, or fruit to trees; spokes and hubs to wheels.

- 2/23 At work time in the art area, Lorenzo draws a face with a mouth, two eyes, two ears, a nose and hair. He adds “earrings” to each ear, and a black arch to the top of the hair, calling it “the hair thingy like Miss Carol wears” (referring to her black headband).
- 4/25 During work time at the easel, Sydney paints an item resembling a flower with six yellow petals, a center, and a stem with two leaves.
Level 1. Child pretends to be an animal, an object, or another person.

Imitating people and animals is a way for children to try out for themselves the actions, sounds, and words they see and hear.

- 1/17 During large-group time, Trina crawls on all fours and meows to show her choice for the next animal the group will sing about.
- 2/25 During work time in the book area, Jen watches Ms. Pat sit in the rocking chair with Wes. Then she sits in the child-sized rocking chair and rocks her baby doll.

Level 2. Child uses one or more objects to stand for another object.

The child’s ability to see similarities between unrelated things is reflected in his choice of pretend play “props.” For example, a round plate can serve as a steering wheel; an upside-down pan, a hat.

- 1/16 During cleanup, Cassandra puts one foot on a small block and pushes off the other foot, pretending to skate around the room.
- 1/16 During small group, Andrew places the Bristle Block to his ear and says, “Look, a phone!”

Level 3. Child uses both words and actions to portray a role, situation, or setting.

At this level, the child talks and acts to make his or her pretend play clear and understandable.

- 2/24 During work time in the toy area, Kristen lines up horses, cows, and pigs, making each animal’s sound. “Now go to the barn or you’ll get in the rain,” she says, making each animal walk to a big hollow block. “Horses gallop!” she says, making the horses move faster than the cows and pigs.
- 4/2 At work time in the house area, Jesse sets the table. He then goes to the music shelf, rings the triangle, and says, “This is the dinner bell. It’s dinner time!”

Level 4. Child engages in role play with two or more other children.

The child is now able to coordinate his or her pretend play with the pretend play of other children.

- 8/13 At work time, Josiah, Lilly, and John follow each other around the room dressed up as firefighters, making siren noises and pretending to put out fires. [Josiah, Lilly, or John’s anecdote]
- 3/30 At work time in the book area, Angel, Jenna, and Shannon pretend that they are at the library. They fill the grocery cart with the books, and walk around the room. Then Angel pretends to read to Jenna and Shannon. [Angel, Jenna, or Shannon’s anecdote]

Level 5. Child steps out of a role-play situation to clarify it or give directions, then returns to the play.

At this level the child moves freely in and out of the pretend role as needed. Typically, the child_halts the play to give it a new direction or bring it back to its original intent, then resumes the pretend role and incorporates the new idea.

- 5/11 At work time in the house area, Mikayla, Alexis, and Beth are feeding their babies. Mikayla stops and says to Alexis and Beth, “How about I be the auntie coming over with my baby, and you be the sisters?” Alexis and Beth agree. Mikayla picks up her baby doll and pretend to knock on the door. “Hi, Auntie,” says Beth. [Mikayla’s anecdote]
- 11/21 At work time in the block area, Bradley and José play with the zoo animals, making roaring noises and talking in animal voices. Then Bradley says, “Now your lion has to get my bear.” José gets a dump truck, drives it up to Bradley’s bear, and says in his lion voice, “See my big truck, Bear? Jump in for a ride!” [Bradley’s anecdote]
Children develop important physical abilities by becoming aware of what their bodies can do when they move both with and without objects. As they move in different ways, children also acquire an understanding of the concepts and language that are connected to physical actions. Children’s musical abilities are enhanced through opportunities to move to music and sing songs. Giving children many opportunities to listen to music prepares them to sing songs in tune with others. Adults support and extend children’s movement and music experiences by providing them with opportunities to exercise all their muscles, move to a steady beat, move to music, and explore singing.
L. Moving in various ways

M. Moving with objects
N. Feeling and expressing steady beat
O. Moving to music
P. Singing

Level 1. Child pounds with, shakes, twists, or swings an arm or a leg.

This level generally applies to movements done in place in which one body part stays on the floor.

- 8/19 Outside, Dane swings his arms in front of him, pretending to be an elephant.
- 12/17 At large-group time, when Ruthie [her teacher] asks for a new way to move, Chantal shakes her hands rapidly.

Level 2. Child runs, marches, gallops, or jumps.

The child moves his or her whole body while running, marching, or galloping. Jumping involves pushing off with both feet leaving the ground, and landing again on both feet.

- 6/23 During the transition from small-group to outdoor time, Andee marches over to her cubby to put her coat on.
- 9/15 During outside time, Cam, Pnina, and Tamella pretend to be horses and gallop around the yard whinnying.

Item 3. Child walks up or down stairs, alternating feet.

For a movement to qualify as level 3, the child’s feet must take turns stepping from stair to stair. The child may hold on to a railing. A movement may also be assigned a 3 if the child alternates feet as he or she climbs up a rope net or something similar. It is the alternating movement of the feet that is significant at this level, not what children are climbing or stepping on.

- 11/6 Outside, Shelly alternates her feet as she steps up the climber.
- 10/14 During cleanup, Heather brings a doll down from the reading loft, alternating her feet as she comes down the stairs from the loft.

Level 4. Child names a movement and does it.

The child does a movement and tells someone what the movement is, or the child says what movement will be done and then performs the movement.

- 8/18 As soft music plays at work time, Ivy says to the teacher, “I’m tip-toeing to the house area because my baby is sleeping.”
- 4/15 Outside, J. J. says to Mark, “Let’s jump down.” Then they both jump off the low end of the climber.

Level 5. Child hops, skips, or twirls around and stops without falling.

This level involves moving the body in a controlled way, either in personal or general space. Hopping involves pushing off on one foot and landing with the same foot at least three times in a row.

- 3/13 Outside, Michelle skips down the small hill on the playground and runs back up the hill.
- 6/16 At large-group time Marquis twirls around several times before stopping and saying “I’m dizzy.”
Level 1. Child throws or kicks an object.
Either sitting or standing, the child throws an object (such as a ball) with one or two hands, or kicks it with one foot.
  • 9/30 Outside, Chin and Randy kick the soccer ball back and forth to each other.
  • 1/25 In the gym Lucy says, “I’m gonna throw the ball to you, Trevor” and does.

Level 2. Child catches an object.
While sitting or standing, the child catches an object with one or two hands.
  • 10/20 At planning time, André catches the beanbag that is tossed to him.
  • 9/15 Outside, Bella [the teacher] bounces the basketball toward Abby, who catches it with both hands.

Level 3. Child coordinates both hands to manipulate one or more objects.
At this level the child is able to coordinate both hands, often having to move them in opposition to each other to complete a task. Examples include stringing small beads, zipping a zipper, fastening a button, hitting a tambourine, playing a triangle.
  • 4/18 During work time in the toy area, Seth strings wooden beads on a shoelace, holding the shoelace with one hand and the bead with the other.
  • 7/18 At small group, Rajiv cuts paper pieces. He uses the scissors with his right hand and holds the paper with his left, telling the teacher, “I’m making money.”

Level 4. Child dribbles a ball.
The child dribbles a ball with hands or feet. Dribbling is a repeated action, regardless of the type of ball. To be scored at this level, the child may use just one hand or alternate hands, but not two hands together.
  • 5/1 Outside, Irene dribbles the basketball down the sidewalk.
  • 5/15 During gym, Darius bounces the ball, then dribbles it the length of the room.

Level 5. Child strikes a moving object with a bat or paddle.
At this level the child can use a bat or paddle to hit a moving object thrown by another person.
  • 11/11 When Omar, the teacher, pitches the whiffle ball to Mitch, Mitch hits the ball with the bat.
  • 5/1 Outside, Lakeisha uses the Koosh ball paddle to hit the ball back to her teacher.
The child does a steady movement several times in a row, such as patting the knees or hammering.

- 10/9 At large-group time Peggy sits with a drum in front of her, tapping the drum with her hand.
- 12/19 At small-group time Kiesha uses her fist to pound her play dough repeatedly.

Level 2. Child joins others in a steady movement.
The child copies a steady movement that he or she sees others doing.

- 11/10 At work time in the house area, Nani watches as Melvin repeatedly strikes a pan with a wooden spoon. Then she gets another pan and wooden spoon and hits her pan over and over.
- 11/13 During small-group time, Annie paints with repetitive, back-and-forth strokes. Jonathan watches Annie and then makes the same movements with his paintbrush.

Level 3. Child maintains a steady beat to music for 4–8 beats.
The child copies someone else’s movement and maintains that movement to a steady beat (the steady beat can be produced by a rhyme, a song, or a musical instrument) for at least four beats in a row.

- 3/4 While listening to music in the music area, Michelle begins to pat her knees to the beat of the music.
- 10/2 At large-group time, Fernando knocks rhythm sticks together to the song “It’s a Small World.”

Level 4. Child maintains a steady beat to music for 12–16 beats.
This level extends what is done in level 3, so that the child is maintaining a steady beat for 12–16 beats. Remember, at this level the child is responding to the beat of music being sung or played by someone else.

- 1/25 During cleanup Jacob marches to the beat of the cleanup song as he carries the blankets to the house area (at least 12 beats).
- 3/15 At large-group time as the rest of the class is singing the elephant song, Marley stomps to the beat for the entire song.

Level 5. Child chants or sings while maintaining movement to a steady beat.
The child at this level is doing two things at a time—singing or chanting and maintaining movement to a steady beat.

- 4/21 During work time in the house area, Desiree rocks her doll to sleep. She sings “Rock-a-bye, Baby” and rocks front to back to the beat of the song. She rocks her baby for about half the song.
- 5/30 Outside, Monica and Constance march around the playground singing the phrase “Do-a-ditty-ditty-dum-ditty-do” over and over, keeping the beat of the song as they march.
Level 1. Child moves to music.
The child moves his or her whole body to music either in place or around an area.
• 2/2 During large-group time, Sally moves her whole body slowly while listening to the “Gaelic Waltz” recording.
• 5/23 At work time in the house area, Marcus is standing, listening to some music on the tape player, when he suddenly starts to move his body up and down.

Level 2. Child imitates others as they move to music.
The child copies a movement that others are doing to music.
• 4/1 At work time in the block area, several children build a “stage” with the hollow blocks. When Charlene starts to do what she calls “fancy ballet dancing” on the stage, Marijata stops her own dancing and starts to move like Charlene.
• 5/8 During large-group time, Lainie waves her arms to the music of “O How Lovely” and Janet copies the movements that Lainie is doing.

Level 3. Child names a movement and engages in it to music.
The child labels or names a movement he or she is doing to music. The child can name the movement before or after doing it.
• 3/3 During large-group time, when Kelvin is asked how he is going to move to the music, he says, “I’m going to gallop” and he does.
• 4/1 At work time in the art area, Barbara is sitting at the table, swinging her feet very fast as she listens to the “Bumble Bee,” a music tape other children are listening to. When Chris, [her teacher] comments that she notices Barbara’s feet are moving rapidly, Barbara replies, “Yes, I was swinging them.”

Level 4. Child creates and repeats a two-movement pattern to music.
The child creates a two-movement sequence that is repeated, for example, bending and straightening one or both arms to the beat of the music.
• 1/30 During large-group time, Matthais twists and untwists both arms at once as the group sings “Punchinello.”
• 5/10 During large-group time, Liz opens and closes her hands repeatedly to the instrumental music. She does this throughout the song.

Level 5. Child creates (or copies) and repeats a pattern of four or more movements to music.
At this level, the child is able to create (or copy) a repeated four-movement sequence, for example, touching the chest, waist, chest, and head and repeating this. Doing the movements to a familiar song (such as “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes”) does not count for this level because the child may have memorized the song and movements—this level only applies when the child does a newly created repetition.
• 5/22 During large-group time, the group is singing “Eensy, Weensy Spider” (without the movements) and Darnell starts to move his arms up, down, in a circle for the sun, and then back up.
• 6/19 During large-group time, Joey repeats Jamal’s idea for a movement pattern—touching his head, his nose, his chin, and his nose and repeating this as the group sings “Follow, Follow Hudo.”
Level 1. Child makes vocal sounds that vary in pitch.
At this level the child is playing with the sounds he or she can make. The sounds have a variety of pitches. (Pitch is the “highness” or “lowness” of sound.)
- 4/22 During work time in the toy area, Ramon makes car noises as he “drives” a car on the shelf, making swerving sounds (raising and lowering his voice) to accompany the car’s movements.
- 11/21 Outside on the swing, Tabitha makes rising and falling sounds as she swings up and down.

Level 2. Child hums or sings while engaged in another activity.
Often, when a child is particularly focused on an activity, you can overhear him or her humming or singing.
- 10/22 At work time in the art area, Antonia hums “Miss Mary Mack” while painting at the easel, a song sung by the group yesterday at large-group time.
- 3/24 During work time at the water table, Marco sings “The Bubble Gum Song” while pouring water from one container to another.

Level 3. Child sings part of a simple song with others.
The child joins in singing part of a song. If you listen to a group of young children singing, you may notice that some join in for parts of the song (such as the chorus) and stop singing for other parts.
- 2/15 During large-group time as the group sings “Star Light, Star Bright,” Traver joins in with the words “Star Light, Star Bright” each time.

The child sings an entire three-pitch song on pitch. The following are three-pitch songs: “Hot Cross Buns,” “Star Light, Star Bright,” “Doggie, Doggie, Where’s Your Bone,” “Lucy Locket.”
- 9/10 Outside, while playing in the sand box, Jennifer sings the entire song “Doggie, Doggie, Where’s Your Bone.”
- 2/6 At work time in the house area, Jai sings the song “Hot Cross Buns” while setting the table for his pretend dinner.

Level 5. Child sings a song with five or more pitches.
The child sings an entire song that has five or more different pitches, such as “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” “Wheels on the Bus,” “Follow, Follow” (five pitches); “Hokey, Pokey,” “Bluebird, Bluebird,” “Bingo,” “The Muffin Man” (six pitches); “Eensy, Weensy Spider,” “Loopy Lou,” “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush” (eight pitches); “Old MacDonald,” “Rock-a-Bye Baby,” “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” and “Farmer in the Dell” (nine pitches).
- 4/5 At work time in the toy area, Tamika sings “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” while playing with the farm animals.
- 7/19 At the end of the day, while waiting for Granny to pick him up, Dan sings “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”

Given many opportunities to learn songs, children are eventually able to distinguish between words spoken and words sung. As others sing, children begin to join in with pitches and eventually sing the entire song in tune.
In the preschool years, children’s ability to learn language is growing in leaps and bounds. They now enjoy using words to describe experiences they’ve had, to act out pretend conversations, to make plans, and to work out problems with playmates. Preschoolers also like to play with language: they enjoy jokes, chants, and rhymes, and they often make playful use of words and phrases they’ve heard from older people. They love listening to and making up stories, and they are also making beginning attempts at reading and writing. The abilities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing are intertwined and their development is interdependent.

To create the best kind of support for language abilities, then, we can’t short-change any one area of language for another. Preschoolers need lots of experiences in speaking and listening, in taking part in everyday conversations, in explaining their discoveries, and in using language as part of their play. Just as important, they need exposure to the written word: listening to stories, using print materials in their environment for pretending, taking part in playful small-group experiences planned around letters, and seeing their own name used to identify their belongings, artwork, and so forth in the classroom.
Level 1. Child responds with actions or words to a suggestion, request, or question.

The child acts on his or her understanding of a verbal request, suggestion, or question. The child may respond with speech or an action directed to the speaker or to someone else in the vicinity.

- 4/4 During cleanup time, when Lee drops the basket of markers on the floor and Eli says, “You need some help!”, Eva looks up from her puzzle, walks to the art area, and helps Lee and Eli pick up the markers. [Eva’s anecdote]
- 9/13 During recall time the teacher calls James on the phone and asks, “Where did you work today?” With the phone up to his ear, James points to the computer.
- 11/30 At work time in the book area, Marla [a teacher] reads "The Big Red Barn" to Lonnette. Marla says, “I wonder where the kitty is?” Lonnette points to the kitty in the picture.

Level 2. When listening to a story, rhyme, or narrative, child anticipates and fills in a word or phrase.

The child listens to a familiar spoken text and supplies the appropriate next words when the reader or teller pauses, hesitates, or speaks slowly.

- 10/20 At greeting time, Hector listens to Paul’s dad read The Very Hungry Caterpillar. When Paul’s dad reads “And on Tuesday he ate through two _____,” Hector says, “Pears!”
- 11/17 At large-group time, T. J. fills in the phrase “and do not let them in!” when the teacher pauses at the end of the song “Open, Shut Them.”

Level 3. When listening to a story, rhyme, or narrative, child comments on or asks a question about it.

The child listens to a spoken text, forms an idea or question about it, and then expresses it.

- 1/16 At greeting time, after hearing Renee [his teacher] tell a story about a dog on a boat, Nathan asks, “Why didn’t the dog have a house?”
- 4/19 At snack time, when his teacher reads the book Pizza, Sunil says, “My mommy made me pizza last night.”

Level 4. Child contributes to an ongoing conversation.

The child listens to a conversation between two other people, has an idea of what they are talking about, and makes a bid to join it by making a related comment.

- 10/21 In the house area during work time, David and Willis talk about birthday parties. Justin listens and adds, “My mom and dad are going to buy me a big dinosaur for my birthday.”
- 7/11 At greeting time, Kendra watches and listens as Dewan and his dad discuss an upcoming zoo field trip. Kendra moves closer and asks, “Are we going to see seals there?”

Level 5. Child sustains a dialogue by taking three or more conversational turns.

By now, the child attends to a conversation and helps to keep it going by making statements the other person can respond to. The child may or may not initiate the conversation.

- 6/12 At work time in the block area, after building a block structure, Caitlin and Debi take a look at it:
  - Caitlin: This is the princess’s bedroom over here.
  - Debi: Okay, then I’m gonna be the princess.
  - Caitlin: I’ll be your sister.
  - Debi: You can have the bedroom next to mine.
  - Caitlin: Let’s go put our dresses on.
  - Debi: You wear the blue one, and I’ll get the purple. (They do.)
- 9/23 Eli and Thyrone are painting and conversing together on the floor in the art area:
  - Eli: Look! It’s squishing out!
  - Thyrone: Mine, too!
  - Eli: What about this other color?
  - Thyrone: You mean red?
  - Eli: Yeah, okay, red . . . . There it goes, right on top!
  - Thyrone: It’s still squishing out!
Level 1. Child talks about people or objects close at hand.
The child talks freely about people and materials in the immediate area, that is, things he or she sees, hears, tastes, touches, or smells.
• 8/13 When she arrives at school, Evelyn says, “Look, Ms. Mary, I got a new coat!”
• 7/23 As Leroy, DeJuan, and their teacher are cleaning up after work time, Leroy says to the teacher, “I want DeJuan to sit by me at lunch.”

Level 2. Child talks about absent people or objects.
At this level the child can talk about people and materials that are not present in the immediate setting, that is, people and things he or she cannot see, hear, taste, touch, or smell. This includes talking about things that happened in the past, and things that might happen in the future.
• 8/8 At snack time, Dominic tells José, “Last night I wore my Daddy’s cowboy boots!”
• 12/10 At greeting time Chloe says, “Marcy’s not here. I think she’s still sick.”

Level 3. Child uses vocabulary related to a particular subject.
The child uses words associated with a topic of interest. For example, the child may talk about fishing, using words like “cast,” “spin,” “reel,” “pole,” “bobber,” “sinker,” “hook,” “bait,” “keeper,” “nightcrawler,” and “net.”

Level 4. Child uses two or more words to describe something.
The child describes the features of a person, place, thing, or event, using two or more details. For example, he or she might say, “That’s a big furry dog,” or “That dog’s got brown fur and floppy ears,” or “That dog is sleeping with his tongue hanging out.”
• 2/5 At the end of the day, Parker says, “I’m going to be really sick tomorrow. I’ll have a big headache, and my back and my eyes will hurt.”
• 7/11 At planning, Amber says, “I’m gonna put the shiny purple skirt on the bear.”

Level 5. Child asks about the meaning of a word.
At this level the child is aware of hearing a new word and understands that although he or she doesn’t know what it means, the person using or reading it probably does.
• 8/2 At lunch Logan asks Elaine [his teacher], “What does ‘pucker’ mean?”
• 10/7 On a field trip to the bakery, the teacher tells the children the dough is rising. “What do you mean, ‘rising’?” Francis asks.

As young children grow, they add an increasing number of different words to their working vocabularies, enhancing their ability to understand their world and express themselves.
Level 1. Child uses words and phrases.
The child verbally expresses an idea with a single word (“Me!”) or a phrase (“Big truck!” “Go to sleep.”).
- 8/14  At work time in the house area, Ethan climbs into a giant cardboard box and says, “I’m in.”
- 12/16  Outside, when watching Felice blow bubbles, Brianna says, “Oh my.”

Level 2. Child uses a sentence of four or more words.
The child speaks in short sentences (“Sniffy is eating the tube!”), complete with a subject (“Sniffy”) and a verb (“is eating”).
- 5/13  At greeting time Maddy says, “I see Holly’s mom!”
- 3/13  At recall Larry says, “I played with blocks and trucks.”

Level 3. Child uses two or more simple sentences in a row.
The child sustains an idea through two or more simple sentences in a row. A simple sentence has one subject, a verb, and a single object (or no object). For example, in the sentence “I like dogs,” “I” is the subject, “like” is the verb, and “dogs” is the object.
- 11/13  At work time, sitting on a toy rocking boat and pointing to the blue carpet, Bianca says, “I’m going fishing. This is the water!”
- 10/2  At work time in the house area, Kalen hands the teacher the blood pressure cuff and says, “You have to pump it up. See, you squeeze this to pump it up.”

Level 4. Child uses a compound subject or object in a sentence.
The child includes two or more subjects and/or two or more objects in one sentence, reflecting his or her developing ability to hold in mind two things at once. For example, in the sentence “Jim and Kiara made a robot, a castle, and a dragon!” “Jim” and “Kiara” are the two subjects and “robot,” “castle,” and “dragon” are the three objects.
- 12/15  Outside, Ryan tells his Mom, “Me and Sam found a hard nut.”
- 7/14  At planning time Sky tells the teacher, “I’m going to make a car and a garage for it.”

Level 5. Child uses a clause that starts with “when,” “if,” “because,” or “since” in a sentence.
The child connects related ideas in one sentence by using dependent clauses to express conditions, for example, “When you’re finished using the steering wheel, then it’s my turn.” “If it’s raining at outside time, we can play under the awning.” “I get to be Superman because I’m the person with the cape.” “Since you’re the baby, you can’t drink any coffee.”
- 8/14  As they are getting ready to go home, Jared looks at the spider on display and asks Sonia, another child, if it is real. Sonia replies, “Every day we come in and it’s in the same spot. If it was real, it would crawl.” [Sonia’s anecdote]
- 9/10  At nap time Paige says to Rhonda [a teacher], “When I grow up, I’m going to be big like you and my mom. No more naps!”

As young children grow, they develop the ability to put words together into phrases and then into increasingly complex sentences.
Level 1. During play, child makes the sound of an animal or vehicle, or some other environmental sound.
The child imitates familiar indoor and outdoor sounds, incorporating them into conversation and play.
- 1/14 During planning time Zongping makes car sounds, “Rrrum, rrrum,” as she pretends to drive a car to the block area.
- 7/12 “Woof, woof,” Eric barks, as he crawls like a dog in the house area at cleanup time.

Level 2. Child joins in saying or repeating a rhyme or a series of words that start with the same sound.
The child hears and repeats rhyming phrases (“Hickory, dickory, dock, the mouse ran up the clock”) and alliterations (“Red, red, robin”).
- 5/5 At large group Jeremy says, “Let’s do that ‘Wee Willie Winkie’ song!”
- 5/18 At work time in the art area, while painting at the easel, Payton sings the rhyming phrases “Twinkle, twinkle, little star; how I wonder what you are” over and over again.

Level 3. Child rhymes one word with another or makes up a phrase or sentence that includes a rhyme.
By now the child is able to generate his or her own rhyming words (“leaf, beef”), rhyming phrases (“with a hammer and a hammer”), and sentences that include rhyming words (“There’s a moose and a goose!”).
- 1/13 At small-group time, working with the finger paints, Sharonda says, “The paint feels icky sticky.”
- 9/12 During work time in the book area, Cory rocks in the small rocking chair, singing to himself “Boat and coat, boat and coat.”

Level 4. Child says that two words begin with the same sound.
The child hears and comments on beginning sounds of words that are the same. For example, he or she might note that “sing” and “ceiling” both begin with the /s/ sound, that “xylophone” and “zebra” start with the /z/ sound, and that “Madison” and “moon” both begin with the /m/ sound. At this level the child is making personal discoveries that some words actually share beginning sounds.
- 6/18 During small-group time, Jana tells the teacher, “Jamal’s name starts with /j/, like me, Jana.”
- 1/24 While riding the bus on a field trip, William points to the Wal-Mart sign, saying “Wal-Mart, William, we both have the same /w/!”

Level 5. Child creates a pair or series of words that start with the same sound.
The child uses what he or she knows about beginning word sounds to generate two or more words that start with the same sound. The child plays with alliteration.
- 3/14 While putting their shoes on for outside time, Kelvin says to Toni, “Hey, listen to this! Tan, Tom, toe, Toni!”
- 6/2 Outside on the tire swing, Cam says to Daria, “I have an idea for a funny name—Silly Sally Sand Slapper!”
Q. Listening to and understanding speech  
R. Using vocabulary  
S. Using complex patterns of speech  
T. Showing awareness of sounds in words  
U. Demonstrating knowledge about books  
V. Using letter names and sounds  
W. Reading  
X. Writing  

Level 1. Child shows interest when a book is read aloud.  
The child’s actions convey his or her interest in being read to. For example, when someone is reading a book aloud, the child may stop what he or she is doing, look at the pictures and listen, move as close to the reader and the book as possible, sit on the reader’s lap, or touch the book and the reader.  
• 7/17 At greeting time Loretta sits on her teacher’s lap listening to her read the story Sylvester and the Magic Pebble.  
• 8/12 At work time in the house area, Julie looks up when she hears Ms. Sharelle reading the book Kevin and His Dad. She picks up her baby doll, walks over to the book area, leans over Ms. Sharelle’s shoulder, and listens to the story.  

Level 2. Child holds a book right-side up, turns the pages, and looks at them.  
The child at this level knows how books work. He or she holds a book with the pictures right-side up and looks at each page, turning the pages one by one from right to left.  
• 5/13 During choice time in the book area, Violet sits on the beanbag chair and looks at all the pictures in Flower Garden, turning the pages from right to left.  
• 9/14 At work time in the reading loft, Charles looks at The Big Book of Trucks, turning the pages conventionally.  

Level 3. Child asks another person to read a book to him or her.  
At this level the child understands that reading a book involves looking at the pictures and talking or telling about them, so he or she asks to have someone read a book aloud. The child may request a specific book or he or she may simply ask to be read to.  
• 5/3 In the library Maurice and Dakota sit together looking at Where the Wild Things Are as Maurice tells the story, changing his voice for different characters. [Maurice’s anecdote]  
• 10/5 During morning arrival, Todd tells the story from the book Rosie’s Walk to Lex and his bear. Todd holds the book, turns the pages, and describes what he sees, while Lex sits close to him holding his bear and leaning in to look at the pictures.  

Level 4. Looking at the pictures in a book, child tells the story or makes up a story related to the pictures.  
The child understands that he or she can “read” a book by retelling the story, or by making up a story that is related in some way to the pictures. The child may retell parts of the story (as written), add his or her own observations or variations, and so forth.  
• 5/3 In the library Maurice and Dakota sit together looking at Where the Wild Things Are as Maurice tells the story, changing his voice for different characters. [Maurice’s anecdote]  
• 10/5 During morning arrival, Todd tells the story from the book Rosie’s Walk to Lex and his bear. Todd holds the book, turns the pages, and describes what he sees, while Lex sits close to him holding his bear and leaning in to look at the pictures.  

Level 5. Child points to the words in a book or follows a line of text while telling or reading the story.  
At this level children distinguish a book’s print from its pictures and understand that it is the printed words that actually tell the story. They realize that grownups (and other readers) look at the printed words on each page when they read the book aloud. They may point to a word in the text, run a finger under a line of text, or follow a line of text with their eyes. They may point to words that are the same or similar to the words they are saying or point to text while making up an original story.  
• 9/6 At work time in the book area, Ava opens the book Time for Bed, points to the line of words “It’s time for bed, little mouse, little mouse,” and says, “It’s time for bed, little mouse, little mouse.”  
• 12/7 During arrival time, as Owen “reads” If You Give a Mouse a Cookie, he points to the line “When he’s finished, he’ll ask for a napkin” and says, “When he’s finished, he wants a napkin ‘cause his face is dirty!”
Level 1. Child says or sings some letters.
The child includes the names of alphabet letters in speech or song with no reference to an actual printed or three-dimensional letter. For example, the child may have learned some or all of the alphabet song, or may say a letter name repeatedly simply for pleasure.

• 8/4 While walking to the playground, Marlene sings “The Alphabet Song” along with her classmates. She knows and sings all the words.

• 11/10 At work time at the sand table, Toby digs and piles sand as she chants, “B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O” over and over again.

Level 2. Child names three or more alphabet letters he or she is holding, looking at, typing, or making.
The child connects letter names to actual letters he or she is looking at. The child could be writing letters by hand, searching for and typing letters using a keyboard, handling or making three-dimensional letters, using letter stamps or tiles, or looking at print.

• 7/19 At the computer during work time, Jennifer says, “J-K-L” as she clicks the mouse on each letter.

• 4/15 Upon arrival Veronica points to the letters on her name tag, saying “V-E-R-O-N-I-C-A, Veronica!”

Level 3. Child makes the sound of a letter in a word he or she is looking at, writing, or typing.
The child connects actual letters in words with the sounds the letters represent. This often occurs as children look at books and other print matter, and as they sound out words they are attempting to write.

• 8/10 At snack time Elijah searches through his alphabet pretzels saying “I need /d/, /d/, D for ‘dad’” until he finds a D.

Level 4. Child names 10 or more letters over time.
The child sees and correctly names more than 10 letters that he or she is looking at or holding. The child may correctly identify the letters all on one occasion, on several occasions, or over the course of a day or several days. Thus, several anecdotes together may be required to document a rating at this level. In the Child Anecdotes booklet you will see the alphabet running across the bottom of page 21. This is a handy place to record the letters a child recognizes as you go along.

• 3/19 At recall time, Alvin shows and talks about the “letter paper” he made using letter stamps. He points to and names A, M, D, N, L, I, V, O, X, T, S, C, and E.

• 4/10 At work time, as she works with the typewriter in the house area, Gaby says the letters she is looking for, then types them: G, A, B, Y, M, D, S, and T.

• 4/11 At recall time, after working again with the typewriter, Gaby shows her paper and points out the X, O, L, V (new letters for her) as well as the G, B, Y, and A.

Level 5. Child says a word and identifies the beginning letter or letter sound.
The child recognizes the letter or the sound a word begins with. Typically, children begin with the initial letters and sounds of their own first names and gradually extend this skill to other familiar words.

• 2/6 At snack, as Mabel writes her name on the snack jobs chart for the next day, she tells Anna, “I start ‘Mabel’ with a big M.”

• 9/15 At work time in the book area, Sunil and Colin are looking at a photo of a snake in a nature magazine. “Sss, snake,” says Sunil, prolonging the /s/ sound. “And they go hisss,” he adds, again prolonging the /s/ sound.

Children at this level are beginning to use letter names and to recognize that letters represent sounds that go together to form words.
Level 1. Child uses the same word to name more than one object.
Reading involves comprehension, that is, understanding a relationship between the word “dog” and the pet animal named Frisky who has short fur, four legs, floppy ears, a wet nose, and a curly tail who barks, plays fetch, and sleeps under the bed. For a word to have meaning, a child needs to experience the action, object, or concept the word represents and to hear the word spoken within a meaningful context. For example, a child sees a dog, and immediately hears someone who sees the same dog say “Look at the dog!” At this level, the child generalizes what he or she knows and may overgeneralize the names of things, applying, for example, the word “dog” to other four-legged animals; the word “house” to other buildings; the word “car” to other vehicles; or the word “bird” to robins, crows, ducks, geese, turkeys, and chickens.

**Observation Items**

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**W. Reading**

**X. Writing**

Level 3. Child calls attention to print.
At this level the child notices print and understands that it means something. The child may say something like “That’s writing!” “I see some letters.” “What does that say?” or “There’s lots of writing on here.” When children see print on something, they draw a conclusion as to what it says, based on its context.

- 6/14 When he sees Tara arriving at school carrying a paper bag bearing the McDonald’s logo, Wayne looks at her bag and asks, “Did you go to McDonald’s for breakfast, Tara?”
- 7/24 At work time, in the book area, Serena and Dean sit together on the mini-couch looking at Go Dog Go together. Serena points to the word “Dog” on the cover and tells Dean, “That says ‘dog’.”
- 8/15 While using markers at small group, Benjamin looks over at Anna’s picture and reads, “I love you.” “I see you.” “Keep out!”
- 9/13 During work time, Jordan points to the word “Jobs” written above the jobs chart. “That says ‘jobs’,” he tells Vance, who is visiting for the day.

Level 4. Child recognizes a written word.
The child reads or recognizes a familiar word (“mom,” “stop,” “dad”). Typically, one of the first words a child recognizes is his or her own name. A child may also figure out a word by making the sounds of the letters. “That says ‘cat’ and this says /b/-—‘bat’!”

- 10/4 While working with old greeting cards at small-group time, Marquis reads the words “Merry Christmas” on the card he is cutting up.
Level 1. Child writes using pictures, squiggles, or letterlike forms.

Writing begins as the child imitates adult writing by making pictures, looping squiggles, or letterlike forms, either alone or some combination. The child generally explains this type of writing so that others will be able to “read” what it says.

- 9/10 During work time in the art area, Nina makes lines of squiggles on a sheet of paper and tells her teacher, “Look! I made my name.”
- 10/10 In the block area at work time, Hal makes a sign for his spaceship, drawing a figure with long hair, crossing it out with an X, and writing letterlike squiggles underneath it. “This says, ‘No girls on the spaceship,’” he tells Kay, his teacher.

Level 2. Child uses clay, wire, or sticks to make a recognizable letter.

At this level the child forms some letters using three-dimensional materials. For example, the child may put one Popsicle stick on top of another to make the letter X or the letter T. The letters the child makes at this stage are often larger than most writing; the child usually uses both hands to create the shape of the letter. Letters may be reversed (a backwards S) or upside down.

- 12/11 At work time in the art area, Kayla rolls three short pieces of play dough and fits them together to make the letter K. “I made my K,” she tells her teacher.
- 7/18 At snack time, Trevor places two pretzel sticks in the shape of the letter T. “I made a T!” he says.

Level 3. Child writes two or more recognizable letters.

By now, the child is writing letters in a fairly conventional manner, although some letters may be reversed or upside down, or include extra limbs. The first letters many children write are those in their names.

- 11/4 While using sidewalk chalk outdoors, Hayley writes some big letters on the walkway: an H, a D, and a backwards L.

Level 4. Child writes a string of letters and reads them or asks to have them read.

The child at this level writes letters with some ease and often writes them in strings or groups that have a word-like appearance: “DLMXO,” “JEZLO.”

- 6/13 During work time in the art area, Maurice paints “OM-CRT” at the easel. He then asks Ms. Ray, “What did I write?”
- 9/11 At recall time Owen writes “OWEN ARTMF PPO” in his journal. When it’s his turn to recall, he “reads” it to the other children: “I painted in the art area.”

Level 5. Child writes a phrase or sentence of two or more words.

The child writes a phrase or sentence of two or more words. The words are separated from one another and may be spelled phonetically (“OPN” for “open”) or conventionally.

- 10/10 At small-group time, José draws a picture of a cat eating from a bowl and writes, “TA CT LKS MLK.” To his teacher he reads what he has written: “The cat likes milk.”
- 12/4 At work time in the art area, Tony draws a picture of two figures holding hands and writes “MY MOM AND ME” under the picture.
Young children do not learn mathematical concepts primarily by hearing about them, seeing them on paper, or seeing demonstrations. Instead they construct an understanding of new concepts through active experiences in which they physically work with objects and materials. Children build on what they already know as they construct new explanations for their observations about size, quantity, categorization, patterns, space, speed, and sequence. Children’s understanding of mathematical concepts develops in natural sequences. Later concepts, such as ratio and proportion, depend on the child’s understanding of earlier concepts, such as part-whole relationships. Thus children benefit most from math-related experiences matched to their current strengths.

Scientists gather information about how the world works by using certain basic processes: observing, classifying, experimenting, drawing conclusions, and communicating. Like scientists, preschoolers are also exploring the world and collecting information to figure out for themselves how things work. During this exploration preschoolers, in a rudimentary way, use many of the processes that scientists use. They observe, using their whole bodies and all the senses. They classify, that is, they look for ways to organize the knowledge they have already assembled and to fit new discoveries into categories they have already established. Children experiment as well, not in a laboratory with test tubes and beakers, but by solving problems through trial and error. Children also reach conclusions. For example, in what is the beginning of an understanding of cause and effect, a child might suggest, after observing for a bit, “If you hold the board up higher, those cars will go faster.”
Level 1. Child creates a collection of five or more objects.
At this level the child groups together at least five objects (possibly in a box or other container). The rationale for grouping the objects (for example, shared characteristics) may or may not be apparent to either the child or the observer.

- 5/15 At work time in the block area, Griffin puts a dinosaur, farm animals, and small blocks into the back of a wooden truck.
- 7/17 Outside, Armando picks up wood chips and places them on the steps of the climber.

Level 2. Child sorts a collection into smaller groups of similar objects.
The child may start with a collection and sort it into subgroups or, in the process of assembling a collection, create at least two subgroups of identical or nearly identical objects. (For example, if the child selects two kernels of corn out of a group of mixed seeds, the corn kernels would be considered “identical.”)

- 6/14 During playtime, Sienna finds all the plastic spiders in the room and puts them in a drawer in the house area.
- 3/12 At cleanup time Autumn finds wooden blocks in the Lego bin. She takes them out and places them on the shelf with the other wooden blocks.

Level 3. In sorting, child groups objects that are the same in some way but different in others.
The child sorts objects into subgroups that share at least one property (e.g., all are toy farm animals) but are different in other ways (e.g., their sizes vary).

- 12/23 While working with beans at small group, Yasmine sorts all the red lentils from the green ones on her tray.
- 7/9 At work time in the block area, Marie puts away the wooden blocks by sorting the large rectangles from the small ones and putting them on the shelf first.

Level 4. In sorting, child groups objects that are the same in some way and identifies the similarity.
The child sorts as he or she did in level 3 and also describes the similarity within subgroups by naming at least one property all objects share. Note: The similarity in one subgroup may possibly be the same as in another subgroup, that is, the child may not yet sort into exclusive groups.

- 3/4 During playtime in the toy area, Sasha sorts the plastic bottle tops by color. She gives the red tops to Herman and says, “You can have all the red ones.”
- 1/20 At work time in the house area, Krissie groups all of the empty food boxes on the shelf by color. She says, “Ms. Beth, I’m going to use the orange ones first,” as she pretends to dump the contents of the orange boxes in her pot.

Level 5. Child identifies two or more similarities between objects or groups.
Up to this point, children have demonstrated an awareness of at most one attribute at a time—even though they may use different properties in different subgroups. At level 5, they show awareness at the same time of two or more similarities between the same objects or groups of objects.

- 7/15 While waiting for the bus, Wanda tells Luisa, “Look—we both have dresses and we are both girls.”
- 9/14 At small-group time Sylvia makes purple and green “play dough snakes.” She places the long ones in pie tins and tells Mr. Sands, “I have long purple ones and long green ones.”

As part of their discovery process, children begin to recognize similarities and differences and to group things accordingly.
**Z. Identifying patterns**

**AA. Comparing properties**

**BB. Counting**

**CC. Identifying position and direction**

**DD. Identifying sequence, change, and causality**

**EE. Identifying materials and properties**

**FF. Identifying natural and living things**

**Level 1. Child lines up three or more objects one after the other.**

This behavior is similar to Item Y Level 1 (opposite) in that the child selects objects and brings them in close physical proximity to each other. Here, however, the child is working with three or more objects and the physical arrangement is specifically a row (not necessarily straight) of objects, arranged one after the other. The common properties or the relationship of the objects to one another may not be apparent, but the physical arrangement is.

- **3/3 While playing outside, Carolina lines up four buckets in a row near the shed.**
- **12/7 During choice time in the house area, Samuel lines up three dolls on the kitchen table and says, “I need to feed the babies.”**

**Level 2. Child arranges four or more objects in a repeating series.**

The child creates a string or train of objects as in Level 1 but repeats elements at regular intervals (e.g., lion, tiger, bear; lion, tiger, bear). The whole series of repetitions is often referred to simply as a pattern.

- **7/10 During free play in the house area, Michael fills an ice cube tray with cube blocks, alternating blue and red blocks.**
- **8/3 At work time in the toy area, Colin makes a line of blocks on the floor. He then places a zoo animal in between each block in a series: zoo animal, block, zoo animal, block.**
- **9/23 At small-group time, Joaquin alternates square beads and circle beads as he creates a necklace.**

**Level 3. Child arranges three or more objects in a graduated series.**

The child creates a string of objects, as above, each of which shares a property (e.g., size) that increases (or decreases) in amount or intensity with each successive object.

- **9/19 At work time in the house area, Matea arranges three baby bottles on the shelf from smallest to largest.**
- **2/13 During greeting time in the book area, Ramona lines up five stuffed animals from largest to smallest and pretends to read them a book.**

**Level 4. Child finds or points out a repeating or graduated series.**

The child describes either the repeating elements of a pattern or the increasing or decreasing property of a graduated series.

- **5/18 While eating snack outside, Denise points out a pattern in the tablecloth: “Red, white, red, white.”**
- **9/28 At greeting time, after drawing three circles largest to smallest on the message board, Anu points to each, “That one’s small, then bigger, then biggest.”**

**Level 5. Child adds additional objects to extend a repeating or graduated series.**

When a repeating or graduated series is constructed by someone else, the child must interpret the pattern to correctly add to it. Note: Adding to the middle is more challenging than adding to the ends.

- **7/10 At work time in the house area, Jackson watches Sierra place plastic fruit on the table: red apple, green grapes, red strawberry, and green lime. He adds another red apple to the line of fruit.**
- **8/19 At work time in the toy area, David places the smallest dog on the shelf to complete a set of dogs arranged smallest to largest.**

A pattern is a recurrent relationship within a set of objects. Patterns can range from simple to complex.
Level 1. Child makes or responds to a statement that includes a comparison word.

The child demonstrates that potentially comparative properties are part of his or her vocabulary even though explicit comparisons may be absent (as when a child says “I’m big” without indicating what his or her size is compared to).

- 7/13 During large group, after the movement song is over, Lanie says, “I’m fast.”
- 8/10 At work time in the house area, as Grace looks at a picture of her family on the bulletin board, she says, “My brother is little.”

Level 2. Child describes contrasting objects using a word and its opposite.

At this level it should be clear which two objects (events, situations, or conditions) the child is comparing. The child does not yet describe gradations of the shared property (fast, faster, fastest) but instead describes its polar extremes (fast, slow).

- 6/19 At work time in the block area, while playing with the cars and pushing them down a slanted block, Lacey says, “Watch, Ms. T—this one is slow, and this red one is fast.”
- 9/12 While working with watercolor paints at small-group time, Holly shows Ms. Mary her picture and says, “This bed is the big one for my mommy, and the little bed over here is for me.”

Level 3. Child makes an object or structure smaller or bigger and comments on the change.

The child’s statement about the change in an object or structure makes it clear that he or she compared the object’s size before and after (and/or during) the change.

- 12/5 At lunch, DuShawn is eating a piece of ham and tells the teacher, “It’s big—I’m making it little.”
- 9/14 During work time at the sand table, Philippe says, “I’m making my mountain high now, so the road has to go around.”

Level 4. Child uses a comparison word to describe the difference between two objects.

The child compares two objects or conditions using the “er” form to describe the shared property. The objects that the child compares do not have to be visible to him or her.

- 4/4 When her mom picks her up, Leslie tells her, “I’m little now, but I’m going to marry that kid when I’m bigger” and points to Clarence.
- 7/30 Outside, Mohammed notices that Renee’s ball bounces higher, saying “No fair, her ball is bouncier than mine.” (Mohammed’s ball actually is a bit flat.)

Level 5. Child uses a conventional or an unconventional measuring tool and states the result.

Measuring is a way of comparing that allows the results to be quantified. As children learn about comparing objects, they are laying the groundwork for measuring.

- 1/24 At work time in the block area, as another child builds a tower with cardboard blocks, Zoey stands next to it and says, “The tower is five blocks high, and I’m bigger than that.”
- 4/4 At snack time, Jefferson takes his crackers and lays them out on his placemat, saying “Look, mine is five crackers long!”

Young children compare properties of objects, such as length, size, height, weight, age, softness, brightness, or loudness.
Level 1. Child uses a number word.
The child uses a number word to describe something, just as he or she might use a color name. Correctness is not required.
- 7/12 When the teacher introduces the police officer to the class at large-group time, Howie says, “I’m four.”
- 8/19 At work time in the toy area, while building and pretending with the Bristle Blocks, Beau says, “I have three kids.”

Level 2. Child counts objects, naming one number for each object.
The child points to two or more objects one at a time and says a number word for each object. The child does not have to count correctly.
- 6/13 At lunch time Adam sets a fork next to each cup on the table and counts, “One, two, three, five.”
- 7/24 During work time in the art area, Olson places dinosaur stickers on a piece of paper, and counts: “One, two, three, four.”

Level 3. Child counts or responds to a request for 5 to 10 objects.
At this level the child begins to understand that a number represents the quantity of a group of objects.
- 5/30 At work time in the toy area, Jimmy asks Tamara for “five more” monkey links. Tamara correctly counts five monkeys and gives them to Jimmy. [Tamara’s anecdote]
- 8/19 At snack time, Keira counts seven Goldfish crackers when she serves herself snack.

Level 4. Child counts 11 or more objects and uses the last number to say how many.
At this level the child understands that counting words often represent things (10 apples, 3 toothbrushes, 4 goats) and that when a person counts two or more things, the last number spoken expresses the total quantity of objects (e.g., “There are one, two, three, four—four glasses.”)
- 4/14 At work time in the book area, when working with the magnet board, Maggie counts 13 letters on the board and says, “Look, I have thirteent!”
- 7/23 Upon arriving, Spencer counts the children’s symbols (which are hanging above their coat hooks). He tells the teacher, “We have 16 kids in our class.” [He is correct.]

Level 5. Child counts two groups of objects and says which one has more.
The ability to count and to understand quantity are tools that enable the child to begin to compare groups of things.
- 9/14 During small group, Mabel counts five locks. In another pile, she counts seven keys and tells the teacher, “I have more keys.”
- 3/17 Xavier counts Ted’s six apple slices and then counts his own five apple slices, saying “Ted has one more than me.”
Level 1. Child moves or places an object as requested.
The child complies with someone’s direction to place or move an object.
- 9/12 At greeting time the teacher asks Ruby to put her backpack in her cubby, and Ruby does so.
- 4/23 During large-group time, when Aisha says, “Put your beanbag on your shoulder,” Marijata does so. [Marijata’s anecdote]

Level 2. Child uses a position word.
Position words describe the location of an object or person in relation to another object or person.
Examples of position words (or phrases) are “under,” “next to,” “behind,” “on,” “underneath,” “the beginning of,” and “the end of.”
- 9/12 At cleanup time, Ian asks Shelby, “Where did you go?” Shelby replies, “I’m under the table.” [Shelby’s anecdote]
- 8/24 At large-group time, Angie says, “I want to sit next to the teacher,” and she does.

Level 3. Child uses a direction word.
Direction words usually describe the course of movement. Examples of direction words are “to,” “towards,” “in,” “out,” “into,” “out of,” “up,” “down,” “forward,” and “back.”
- 2/28 While looking at the guinea pig, Peter says, “He went into the box—we must’ve of scared him.”
- 5/18 At work time in the house area, Trudy tells Jude, “You go into the block area, and you be the worker coming to my house.”

Level 4. Child uses a distance word.
Distance words describe such relationships as “near,” “far,” “short,” and “long.”
- 7/13 At breakfast, while talking about visiting her grandma over the weekend, Courtney says, “My grandma lives far away. We have to be in the van a long time.”
- 9/13 During greeting time the teacher tells the class, “We are walking to the park today,” and Mara asks, “Can we go the short way?”

Level 5. Reading a map, child uses a position, direction, or distance word.
A map used by preschoolers is likely to be a simple depiction of classroom, home, or neighborhood.
- 12/13 At planning time, Marlon drives the small car on the simple room map, moving it from the planning table in the art area to the house area and saying “I want to go over to the house area and make some soup with that big pot.”
- 3/23 During work time in the block area, Anna and Corrin ask Becki [their teacher] if they can use the room map for their “treasure map.” After getting it from Becki, Anna points to the book area on the map and says, “Let’s hide it in here.” They then go to the book area and place a pine cone under one of the pillows. [Anna’s anecdote]

Young children are beginning to understand and express where objects are and where they are going.
Level 1. Child anticipates the next event in a sequence.
Anticipating the next event is the most basic way to show awareness of a sequence.

- 7/12 At the end of small-group time, when the teacher announces, “Five more minutes,” T. J. says, “I don’t want to clean up and go outside. I always get too cold.”
- 12/2 During large-group time, Destiny asks, “After we sing this song, can we go to the gym?” (Gym is the next event in the daily routine.)

Level 2. Child describes a sequence of events.
By describing a sequence of two or more events, the child shows an understanding of sequence.

- 6/20 Outside, Austin says to LaToya, “After we go inside, we eat lunch and then get our blankies for nap.”
- 5/14 Upon arriving late at school, Quinn tells Kimberly [his teacher], “My mommy made me pancakes, then we went to the dentist, and then she brought me to school.”

Level 3. Child describes a change in an object or situation.
Recognizing that a change has occurred requires the child to recognize a sequence of events. This is a prerequisite to understanding cause and effect.

- 2/15 During breakfast Lissie says, “I’m not cold like yesterday. I have a warmer shirt on today.”
- 6/12 Upon arrival, Nancy goes to the window to look at the grass growing in cups. She says to Joe, “Look, it’s growing lots!” In fact, the grass has grown over the weekend.

Level 4. Child compares the rates or durations of two events.
To compare rates, the child uses words such as “faster” and “slower”; to compare durations, the child uses words such as “longer” and “shorter.”

- 8/8 Outside, riding a bike on the sidewalk, Mason rides it up the hill. He says, “Hey, now I’m going slower.”
- 3/2 During work time at the computer, Tiffany says, “This computer is taking longer than Perry’s. Can you fix it, Mr. B.J.?” Her computer has frozen up and needs to be rebooted.

Level 5. Child explains that an event or change happens because of something else.
The child uses words that show an understanding of cause and effect.

- 7/2 At work time, as they look at a transportation book in the book area, Edie tells Armani, “I’m riding a plane to Florida because it’s faster than the Honda.”
- 8/12 When he gets off the bus, Cody says to the teacher, “Guess what—I got to eat cake for breakfast because yesterday was my birthday.”
Level 1. Child identifies a property of an object.
Understanding materials starts with identifying their properties, such as size, shape, color, texture, and weight. At this level, a material’s use is considered one of its properties, as when a child says about flour, “You can make cookies out of it.”

- 9/12 At greeting time, Nga gives her dad a book to read, saying “This book is gigantic.”
- 12/12 During snack, Dean takes a drink of his chocolate milk, saying “Mmm . . . it’s cold.”

Level 2. Child identifies the material an object is made of.
The composition of an object is a more subtle property that children usually become aware of after recognizing its more visually obvious properties.

- 7/14 At snack time, when Ron asks where applesauce comes from, Savannah answers, “Applesauce is made from squished apples.”
- 6/13 At work time in the house area, Carrick tells Gavin, “Don’t eat that pizza—it’s plastic!”

Level 3. Child identifies a part of an object and the whole it belongs to.
Complex objects have distinguishable parts or pieces. A child who can distinguish a part and relate it to the whole shows an awareness of both at the same time.

- 9/20 At work time in the book area, while looking at Seven Little Rabbits, Maia says, “Look, the bunny has a little tail.”
- 7/13 During cleanup, when Jeffrey puts a blue cap on an orange marker, Talia says, “Hey, that is not right! You need a blue cap for that blue one.”

Level 4. Child selects a material based on its properties.
The child demonstrates his or her mastery of the concept of properties by relating the properties of an object or material to the needs of the task.

- 3/25 During choice time in the house area, Radha tells Min, “I don’t want the wooden necklace. I want that sparkly one because it goes with this shiny dress!”
- 10/16 At work time in the art area, Paris cuts paper and says, “Pass me the red paper—I need to make fire.”

Level 5. Child numbers the parts or features of an object.
The child begins to quantify the properties of objects.

- 7/12 At lunch time, when asked to get more rolls from the lunch cart, Dakota at first doesn’t see them. Then he says, “It’s got three shelves. I always forget to look at that bottom one!”
- 6/12 At work time, on his way to the bathroom, Phil shouts to Jorge (whom he is playing with in the house area), “I want the purse with two flowers!”

Young children grow in their understanding of the composition and characteristics of objects.
FF. Identifying natural and living things

Level 1. Child names a natural object or material.
The child distinguishes natural objects from one another and shows familiarity with the corresponding vocabulary.
  • 8/30 At outside time Cameron says, “Look at the snow!”
  • 6/23 Star picks up acorns at outside time, hands them to Ms. Carla, and says, “Let’s put these acorns in the can with the stones.”

Level 2. Child performs an action helpful to plants or animals.
The child cares for a living thing in a simple way.
  • 8/15 At arrival, after looking at the fish tank, Josh tells the teacher, “I think the fish are hungry. Let’s feed them.”
  • 10/30 At work time in the house area, Arlis fills a cup with water and waters the jade plant.

Level 3. Child characterizes something as living or not living.
The child at this level can make basic distinctions between living and nonliving things in the natural world.
  • 4/23 At greeting time, Hoshiko brings Ms. Tanisha a bouquet of tulips and says, “You have to put these in water or they’ll die.”
  • 1/13 At work time in the block area, when another child makes the toy lion roar at Lee, he shouts back, “That lion’s not alive! So it can’t hurt me!”

Level 4. Child identifies a change in a material or the environment and a possible cause.
As the child begins making the distinctions among natural objects, materials, and creatures portrayed in Levels 1 to 3 above, he or she notices that both living and nonliving things undergo changes and that these changes can be the result of other events or changes in the their world.
  • 3/17 During small group, Kai steps on a plastic ring and tells Ms. Lucielle, “We have to throw this one out—it’s broken ‘cause I stepped on it by mistake.”
  • 11/23 On a walk to the park, Sharon says, “Look, all the birds are gone.” She continues, “It’s too cold for them to be in our tree,” and points to the neighbor’s tree with the bird feeders.

Level 5. Child identifies where a natural object or material comes from.
The child is beginning to connect natural objects and creatures with the distinctive sources or settings where they are formed by natural means. This level focuses on a child’s earliest awareness of a living thing’s natural environment or habitat.
  • 6/30 At lunch Preetah tells the teacher, “Milk comes from cows and goats.”
  • 4/12 While playing at the water table, Hassan discovers a shell and says, “This comes from the ocean.”
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