Learning Progression Levels

Levels A–D represent developmental stages and standards that precede Levels 1–5 and allow teachers to assess children who may be at earlier stages of development, including children with disabilities and children who are English learners.

Progression Levels

Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D

Developmental levels preceding Level 1

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Approximately three years of age	Progress toward kindergarten entry		Approximate entry to kindergarten	Approximate end of kindergarten

Levels 2 and 3 represent a child's progress between three years of age and kindergarten entry.

Levels 1, 4, and 5 represent the milestones at approximately three years of age (Level 1), entry to kindergarten (Level 4), and the end of kindergarten (Level 5).

Universal Design and Use of Adaptations

Area of Functioning	Examples of Adaptations	
Communication	Communication system	• Simplify the language used by adults; use shorter phrases with familiar words. • Become familiar with the child's typical mode(s) of response, which may be subtle movements, eye gaze, gestures, or unique sounds. • Use words the child understands. • Use any signs the child understands or uses. • Use an augmentative or alternative communication system the child understands or uses.
	Sensory support	• Use visual or tactile cues to support the child's communication.
Hearing	Communication system—Hard of Hearing	• Add use of gestures or signs in communication.
	Sensory support— Hard of Hearing	• Make sure hearing aids or the auditory amplification system in the classroom are on and working. • Get close to the child and face the child when speaking.
	Sensory support— Hard of Hearing	• Use the child's system of communication: American Sign Language, Signing Exact English, Cued Speech, etc.
	Sensory support— Hard of Hearing	• Get the child's attention visually and make sure the child is looking at objects in the environment that are being referenced.
Motor	Positioning— Large Motor	• Place the child in a supported position that will provide the stability needed to have the most optimal control of movements. • Consider the child's range of motion and ability to reach, move, or turn toward the person or object. • If mobility is severely limited, place materials within the child's visual field and reach.
	Adaptive equipment— Large Motor	• The child may need adaptive equipment for movement, such as a walker or wheelchair. • Provide materials that will help the child's posture and stability such as wedges, bolsters, seating systems, and other postural supports.
	Alternate response mode— Large Motor	• The child may use different body parts to accomplish a task.
	Time— Large Motor	• The child may move more slowly than peers; provide for additional time during activities and routines if needed.
	Positioning— Small Motor	• Place the child in a supported position that will provide stability needed for the most optimal control of movements.
	Adaptive materials— Small Motor	• Provide materials that will help the child grasp and manipulate the object, such as an adapted spoon and cup or writing tools such as a thick crayon or pencil.
	Alternate response mode— Small Motor	• The child may use different body parts to accomplish a task.
	Time— Small Motor	• The child may move more slowly than peers; provide for additional time during activities and routines if needed.

Area of Functioning	Examples of Adaptations	
Sensory Sensitivity	Adjust sensory input	• Increase, decrease, or provide different tactile, visual, or auditory input. • Allow the child to engage in activities that have been identified to promote sensory regulation, such as swinging for a few minutes before group time or holding a vibrating object during group time.
	Preferred materials	• Use materials that are preferred by the child and that foster interest and engagement. • Avoid materials or objects that may be aversive to the child because of a characteristic such as touch, light, or sound.
Social/ Interactional Functioning	Communication system	• Use any alternative or augmentative communication system or functional communication behaviors the child responds to or initiates.
	Preferred materials	• Use materials that are preferred by the child even if not typical for the activity.
	Preferred adult or peer	• Arrange for proximity/interactions with preferred peer. • Arrange for proximity of preferred adult to encourage interactions with others.
Vision	Visual Materials— Low Vision	• Use objects that are large enough for the child to see, high contrast colors, and either extra or reduced lighting depending on the child. • Use adaptive materials such as a light box, magnifiers, and other low vision aids as appropriate. • Place materials in relation to the child such that they are within the child's visual field and at optimal viewing distance.
	Sensory Support— Low Vision	• Provide tactile or physical input when explaining what the child is being asked to do. • Provide verbal explanations about what the child is being asked to do. • Make sure glasses are clean and any visual aids are available.
	Orientation and Mobility— Low Vision	• Allow the child to use any beginning orientation and mobility techniques, including scanning, trailing, cane use, and protective techniques, at the level he or she is proficient.
	Alternative Response Mode— Low Vision	• The child may turn head or use head movements to utilize a limited visual field.
	Time— Low Vision	• The child may move more slowly than peers; provide for additional time during activities and routines if needed.
	Sensory Support— Blind	• Provide tactile input by letting the child tactilely explore and identify an object prior to being asked to perform an action with it. • Guide the child physically through an action in order to communicate what is desired, and then observe whether the child can do it without guidance. • Provide verbal explanations and/or tactile input about what the child is being asked to do.
	Environmental Support— Blind	• Provide boundaries around the space the child is attending to; for example, put materials on a tray. • Keep the larger environment organized and consistent.
	Orientation and Mobility— Blind	• Allow the child to use any beginning orientation and mobility techniques, including scanning, trailing, cane use, and protective techniques, at the level he or she is proficient.
	Materials— Blind	• When appropriate, use real objects rather than toy representations. • The child may need to use Braille materials and tools. • Use materials with tactile or auditory interest.
	Time— Blind	• The child may move more slowly than peers; provide for extra time during activities and routines if needed.

Observing Skills, Knowledge, or Behaviors

Each Skill, Knowledge, or Behavior (SKB) has an operational definition, as shown below, that identifies or explains the SKB. Below the definition are observation directions that provide additional support to teachers when they are observing.

Notice that each level has a description that describes the SKB. This "level descriptor" helps the teacher when documenting the observable behavior. Teachers should observe behaviors during regular daily classroom routines, whenever possible.

The level descriptors further show which specific aspects of the SKBs the teacher should look for in an observation. Examples of observable behaviors associated with each developmental level are also provided. The examples identify only one or two of many behaviors that a child might exhibit as evidence of a particular level of development.

Level Descriptors

Observation Directions

SKB: Emotion Identification	Responds to emotions of others and expands to identifying emotions of self and others	
Domain: **Social Foundations**	Strand: **Social Emotional**	Learning Progression: **Awareness and Expression of Emotion**

OBSERVATION DIRECTIONS
Look for instances when they identify their own and others' (children or characters in stories) emotions. For each child, ask clarifying questions to understand his/her emotions, if necessary, such as:
- How do(es) you/he/she feel?
- Why do(es) you/he/she feel that way?
- What might happen because you/he/she feel(s) that way?
- How would you feel if you were [child/character]?
- What two feelings might you have if [situation], and why would you have each feeling?

Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Attends to emotional expressions of others.	Changes responses in relation to emotional expressions of others.	Uses the emotional expressions of others as a guide for how to act in a situation.	Uses simple words or gestures to describe own and others' feelings (e.g., happy, sad).	Identifies emotions expressed by self and others (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger, fear).	Identifies common emotion-eliciting situations and the emotions elicited in each.	Identifies and explains the reasons behind and the consequences of the emotions expressed by self and others.	Identifies emotions expressed by others in a given situation and compares them to own emotions in similar situations.	Identifies and explains own conflicting feelings in a specific situation (e.g., is excited for trip to the park but is sad that best friend can't come).
EVIDENCE EXAMPLES								
Daphne—Daphne looked intently at a child who was crying.	**Cameron**—When I smiled at Cameron, he smiled back. When I frowned at Cameron, he frowned back.	**Oliver**—While we were outside, we heard a loud motorcycle. It startled me, and I looked fearfully in the direction of the noise. Oliver looked at me and reached for my hand.	**Mia**—After Mia's parent said goodbye, Mia looked to me, pointed to herself, and said, "Sad."	**Meredith**—Meredith pointed to Billy and said, "Billy sad." Billy's mother had just left the room, and he was standing by the door and crying.	**Julia**—Julia pointed to a picture of two figures that she had drawn and said, "Keri's my friend. We are happy to play together."	**Holly**—Holly said, "I get mad when my sister messes up my drawings." I asked, "What do you do when you get mad?" Holly said, "I tell my mom, and she tells my sister to play with something else."	**Frankie**—Frankie said, "Nathan was scared to go on the monkey bars, but I wasn't because I watched my big brother do it before."	**Philip**—Philip said, "I am excited for the field trip to the aquarium, but I am worried about seeing the sharks."

Evidence Examples
Teachers should not feel limited by the evidence examples. Within and across observations, a variety of other behaviors could demonstrate what would be expected at each developmental level.

ISPROUT SKB Observational Rubrics

SKB: Emotion Identification	Responds to emotions of others and expands to identifying emotions of self and others	
Domain: **Social Foundations**	Strand: **Social Emotional**	Learning Progression: **Awareness and Expression of Emotion**

OBSERVATION DIRECTIONS

Look for instances when they identify their own and others' (children or characters in stories) emotions. For each child, ask clarifying questions to understand his/her emotions, if necessary, such as:
- How do(es) you/he/she feel?
- Why do(es) you/he/she feel that way?
- What might happen because you/he/she feel(s) that way?
- How would you feel if you were [child/character]?
- What two feelings might you have if [situation], and why would you have each feeling?

Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Attends to emotional expressions of others.	Changes responses in relation to emotional expressions of others.	Uses the emotional expressions of others as a guide for how to act in a situation.	Uses simple words or gestures to describe own and others' feelings (e.g., happy, sad).	Identifies emotions expressed by self and others (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger, fear).	Identifies common emotion-eliciting situations and the emotions elicited in each.	Identifies and explains the reasons behind and the consequences of the emotions expressed by self and others.	Identifies emotions expressed by others in a given situation and compares them to own emotions in similar situations.	Identifies and explains own conflicting feelings in a specific situation (e.g., is excited for trip to the park but is sad that best friend can't come).

EVIDENCE EXAMPLES

Daphne—Daphne looked intently at a child who was crying.	**Cameron**—When I smiled at Cameron, he smiled back. When I frowned at Cameron, he frowned back.	**Oliver**—While we were outside, we heard a loud motorcycle. It startled me, and I looked fearfully in the direction of the noise. Oliver looked at me and reached for my hand.	**Mia**—After Mia's parent said goodbye, Mia looked to me, pointed to herself, and said, "Sad."	**Meredith**—Meredith pointed to Billy and said, "Billy sad." Billy's mother had just left the room, and he was standing by the door and crying.	**Julia**—Julia pointed to a picture of two figures that she had drawn and said, "Keri's my friend. We are happy to play together."	**Holly**—Holly said, "I get mad when my sister messes up my drawings." I asked, "What do you do when you get mad?" Holly said, "I tell my mom, and she tells my sister to play with something else."	**Frankie**—Frankie said, "Nathan was scared to go on the monkey bars, but I wasn't because I watched my big brother do it before."	**Philip**—Philip said, "I am excited for the field trip to the aquarium, but I am worried about seeing the sharks."

SKB: Two-Dimensional Shapes			Explores two-dimensional shapes and expands ability to match, identify, and describe two-dimensional shapes					
Domain: **Mathematics**			Strand: **Geometry**			Learning Progression: **Shapes**		

OBSERVATION DIRECTIONS
Look for instances when they match two-dimensional shapes, identify these shapes, and describe their defining attributes. For each child, pay attention to the following details as you observe:
- what shape(s) the child is matching/identifying/describing
- which specific skill the child is demonstrating related to the two-dimensional shape(s): matching, identifying, and/or describing
- how accurately the child matches/identifies/describes the two-dimensional shape(s)

Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Attends to objects.	Explores objects of different shapes.	Adapts behaviors with objects based on their shape (e.g., rolls a ball; stacks a few large blocks).	Matches simple shapes in play through trial-and-error.	Matches a few basic two-dimensional shapes (e.g., circle, square, triangle).	Matches and identifies a variety of two-dimensional shapes.	Identifies two-dimensional shapes in several different sizes and orientations.	Describes defining attributes of common two-dimensional shapes (e.g., triangles are closed and have three sides).	Compares defining attributes of common two-dimensional shapes (e.g., triangles have three sides, but squares have four sides).

EVIDENCE EXAMPLES

Quinn—Quinn looked at a star shape in a picture book of simple shapes we were looking at together.	**Monica**—Monica reached for a ball in the basket next to her. A few moments later, she took a soft block out of the same basket, looking at it closely.	**Lazarus**—Lazarus stacked three blocks on top of each other. Later that morning he gathered a few balls and rolled them down a ramp.	**Pema**—Pema grasped a triangle block in her hand and tried dropping it into a circle-shaped hole, but it didn't fit. Then she found the triangle hole and dropped the block through the triangle-shaped opening.	**Gabriel**—Gabriel was working on a puzzle that required him to match a triangle piece to a triangular hole, a circle piece to a circular hole, and a square piece to a square hole. Gabriel completed the puzzle accurately.	**Clara**—After working with magnetic tiles, Clara named each shape in the set (triangle, square, diamond, rectangle, and oval) and accurately placed them on a piece of paper with the shapes drawn on it.	**Lucas**—Lucas was looking at a picture of a park scene and was able to identify shapes regardless of their size or orientation (circle: balloons, sun, bicycle tires; square: hopscotch game, window; triangle: kite, sign; and rectangle: picnic table).	**Adalyn**—During a math mini-lesson, Adalyn raised her hands to describe a triangle. She said, "Triangles have three points and three sides."	Ethan—When Adam was trying to fit his cookie in a small square compartment in his lunchbox, Ethan said, "You only have space for something square to go in your box, Adam. The hole there has four sides but your heart cookie is curved—it won't fit in."

SKB: Locomotor Skills	Moves whole body with increasing control, coordination, and balance	
Domain: **Physical Well-Being and Motor Development**	Strand: **Physical Education**	Learning Progression: **Coordination – Large Motor**

OBSERVATION DIRECTIONS
Look for instances when they demonstrate locomotor skills. For each child, pay attention to the following details as you observe:
- what the situation is that provides the opportunity for the child to demonstrate the locomotor skill
- what locomotor skill the child demonstrates (e.g., jumping, hopping)
- what skill level the child demonstrates
- how much control, coordination, and balance the child demonstrates when demonstrating the locomotor skill

Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Moves body or body parts with increasing control.	Moves body through space.	Moves through space in upright position with limited coordination and balance on even, flat surfaces.	Demonstrates ability to move in upright position across different flat surfaces or some sloped surfaces.	Demonstrates a variety of locomotor skills with limited control, coordination, and balance (e.g., jumps down from a step with both feet).		Demonstrates a variety of locomotor skills with some control, coordination, and balance (e.g., hops on one foot a few times in a row).	Demonstrates a variety of locomotor skills with nearly complete control, coordination, and balance (e.g., hops on one foot several times, followed by several hops on other foot).	Demonstrates a variety of locomotor skills with complete control, coordination, and balance (e.g., hops sideways six steps; jumps and turns so that feet land in opposite direction from starting position).

EVIDENCE EXAMPLES

Bethany—Bethany made movements with her arms and hands when I turned on music.	**Daniel**—Daniel used his body to move toward a soft ball that rolled just out of his reach.	**Mallory**—Mallory walked toward me without assistance, but when the tile floor became carpet, she held onto the side of the wall before continuing to walk toward me.	**Ehli**—Ehli walked across the carpet and over the tumbling pad on the floor. He then grasped the railing and walked up a small ramp to the platform where I was seated.	**Jessica**—Jessica walked up a short flight of stairs, using alternating feet on each step. Later, she placed both feet on each step as she walked down the stairs.		**Lana**—Lana ran all the way around the playground, making sharp turns to avoid obstacles, using one hand to steady herself at times.	**Haerin**—Haerin said, "I can hop across the room! Watch me go!" Then Haerin hopped across the room on one foot, periodically switching feet, and reached the opposite wall.	**Blake**—Blake skipped across the playground to where his friends were playing jump rope. Blake joined in and jumped 15 times without tripping over the rope or stopping.