

Based on information from:

Much More Than the ABCs: The Early Stages of Reading and Writing
by Judith A. Schickedanz (1999)

Building Literacy with Love by Betty Bardige and Marilyn Segal (2005)

Ages and Stages by Karen Miller (2007)

Milestone Charts from www.babycenter.com

How I Grow charts from zerotothree.org

Young Children: Stages and Books

**Please note: These are general statements.
Each child develops differently.**

Early Literacy Skills from Every Child Ready to Read @ your library®

Print Motivation: a child's interest in and enjoyment of books and reading

Phonological Awareness: ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words (rhyming, hearing words broken down into parts)

Vocabulary: knowing the names of things

Narrative Skills: ability to describe things and events, to retell stories (expressive language)

Print Awareness: knowing that print has meaning, how to handle a book, directions of print, environmental print

Letter Knowledge: same letter can look different, letters have names and represent sounds

Age in Months	What They Do	Books	Sharing Books	Early Literacy Behaviors
Birth – 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise their heads briefly, turn head side to side • Look around; look back and forth between 2 objects • By 2 or 3 months some control over head when they are supported • Things look fuzzy to them and they see best 8 – 12 inches from their eyes • Prefer patterns to solid colors, sharp contrast in brightness between design and background • Black or bright bold color on white background more interest than design in lighter color on white background • Cannot manipulate objects voluntarily with their hands but will grasp tightly a finger or other object placed in their hands—grasping reflex • By about 3 months they bring the object to their mouths to suck • They pay attention when you speak to them, especially if it is “parentese” style. • Cry, coo with vowel sounds coming first • Turn head toward speaker • Focus on faces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple large pictures or designs set against a contrasting background • Designed to stand up • Stiff cardboard books • Zig-zag pages • <i>Black on White</i> or <i>White on Black</i> by Tana Hoban • Books of individual nursery rhymes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to baby is of utmost importance • Display books with bright bold illustrations along side the crib • If baby likes to lie on the floor, book can be opened wide and placed on the floor • Allow baby to choose to focus on the pictures or not so s/he won't become overstimulated • Say nursery rhymes • Sing songs 	<p><u>Print Motivation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read with your child from birth • Read anything! • Read with a cheerful, clear voice • Don't worry if your child chews or bites on the book; “Oh this looks good, let's see what it is!” <p><u>Phonological Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk clearly and slowly • Sing songs; say rhymes <p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your child • Look at your child as you speak • Speak slowly, clearly, in short sentences • Speak using a slightly higher pitch <p><u>Narrative Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you talk with your child, remember to leave time for your child to “talk” or babble back • When your child coos or babbles, talk back to him/her
4 – 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become able to reach and grasp, if awkwardly • Hold toy or small objects • Into the mouth it goes! Hands, toys, everything • Use hands to bang objects or wave them in the air • Starting to sit up freeing up both hands to manipulate objects • Add consonant sounds to their cooing • Engage in playful conversations (adult and child make sounds back and forth to each other) • Repeat arm/ leg movement to cause an action to recur • Reach for and grab toy • Pull cloth from face • Smile at own reflection in mirror • Smile in response to speaker • Bounce when standing and supported by adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple, bright pictures on contrasting background • Cloth books, soft vinyl books—easy to grasp and pick up, washable • Some cardboard books, but they may be a bit heavy for baby to handle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold baby and book now that the baby can hold up head • Know that babies will grab the book and may not listen long—that's fine! • Baby is getting to know books by chewing, sucking, shaking, and crumbling them. Books are one more thing to be explored. • Try sharing books with baby on your lap and a toy in baby's hand. • Babies enjoy listening to nursery rhymes, songs, fingerplays • Follow baby's cues—ready to read or wants to stop 	<p><u>Print Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share board books with your child • Don't worry if your child chews or bites on the book <p><u>Letter Knowledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give your child opportunities to look at things that are both the same and different. They love to look at all different kinds of faces, for example. • Talk about things that are alike and different.

Age in Months	What They Do	Books	Sharing Books	Early Literacy Behaviors
7 – 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to bang, wave, shake objects, chew and mouth objects Start to throw and drop objects Transfer objects from hand to hand, so they can explore more fully Can hold an object easily with one hand while using the other to explore it. Can discern object qualities (soft, hard, smooth, rough, light, heavy, solid, touch, easily torn, etc.) Start to pick up smaller things with thumb and index finger (pincer grasp)—enables page turning! Point to object s/he wants Hear you name the object s/he points to Begin to crawl Pull up to standing position Babble/vocalize (da-da-da or ba-ba-ba) Interact by smiling and cooing Search for object hidden under blanket Need gestures to understand verbal directions Find toy partially or completely hidden Move to get toy Imitate facial expressions, actions, familiar sounds Look at objects, family members, pictures when named Vocalize differently for hunger, anger, contentment Extend arms to familiar person Recognize self in mirror Transfer objects from one hand to another Hold small object between thumb and index finger Sit alone briefly without support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manipulate objects including books Begins to turn pages Board/stiff books easier to turn pages. Some called Chubby or Chunky books have pages that separate easily. Play with books (crush, rip) Small books to fit small hands Bright bold pictures of familiar things of interest to baby Naming objects and repeating helps develop vocabulary Books with rhymes/rhythmic language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby will sit longer in lap to share a book Point to pictures and say their names (labeling) Talk about the pictures Books with rhymes and rhythmic language Baby will turn the pages quickly or close the book Put books in baby's toy box, diaper bag, on the floor, where they can reach board books Let the baby take the book and point out pictures as you can Don't worry about trying to finish a book, just enjoy it together Follow baby's cues for ready to read or wants to stop Use gestures to explain Use facial expressions to help convey meaning and to engage child Book as peek-a-boo—what's coming next? 	<p><u>Print Motivation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read with your child, with a cheerful, clear voice Don't worry if your child chews or bites on the book: "Let's see what the book says." <p><u>Phonological Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk clearly and slowly Sing songs; say rhymes <p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk with your child Look at your child as you speak Speak slowly, clearly, in short sentences Speak using a slightly higher pitch Use words you use in normal adult conversation <p><u>Narrative Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As you talk with your child, remember to leave time for your child to "talk" or babble back When your child coos or babbles, talk back to him/her <p><u>Print Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share board books with your child Don't worry if your child chews or bites on the book Have some books that you don't mind getting beaten up. If your child throws a book down, pick it up and read it together.
10 – 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More coordinated with hands, place large pegs in holes, manipulate toys Eat finger foods Sit up May stand alone momentarily Walk with adult holding one hand May try to walk, some do walk Find and bring objects and brings to you to play First word Begin to relate names and objects Understand more words than they can say Begin to connect objects and events (putting jacket on means going out so they go to the door) Know own name Know some animal sounds Need gestures to understand verbal directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning interested in book contents, not just the physical book Books with pictures of familiar actions and objects, animals Board books, not just Chunky ones, are best. (Some board books are more appropriate for older children.) Books with rhyme, rhythm, repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get child's attention with "Look" or "Look at this picture" Ask "What's that?" "What do you see?" Give answer if necessary. Give your child a chance to respond. Respond to the child's babbling or smile in a positive way, "Yes, that's a monkey." Let your child be the leader. Child is on the move, so have books around the whole house. Offer some structure like reading before or after nap or at bedtime. Point to animals and say sounds Use gestures to explain 	<p><u>Letter Knowledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about things that are the same and different—real things and pictures in books Talk about and feel different shapes. Play with blocks Play with simple puzzles

<p>10 – 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional drops toy and watch it fall • Imitates adult when playing with toys • Briefly stops behavior when told “no” • Turn when called by name • Gives object upon request • Clap hands and wave on command • Gesture/vocalize wants/needs • Direct others physically: pull pat, push, tug • Repeat actions that get attention of others • Plays simple games—pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo • Show anxiety toward strangers • Expresses two or more emotions • Cruise holding on to furniture • Clap hands • Move body to music 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book as peek-a-boo—what’s coming next • Use facial expressions to help convey meaning and to engage child • Talk about feelings 	
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<p>Age in Months</p>	<p>What They Do</p>	<p>Books</p>	<p>Sharing Books</p>	<p>Early Literacy Behaviors</p>
<p>13 – 18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say some words: “all gone” “more” • Understand more words • May use one word to convey different things depending on how they say it • Point to object when named • May put two words together • Use expressive jargon—nonsense words • Pretend play: objects for pretend activities, like dolls being rocked to sleep • Hum familiar songs • Say “No”; feel independent • “I” “me” “mine” • Follow one-step direction • Follow simple requests without gestures • Respond vocally to “what” questions • Make marks on paper with crayons • Use spoon; drink from cup • Imitate what you do • Imitate tone of voice • Respond to directions “in” and “on” • Get frustrated easily • Like repetition • Short attention span • May carry a book • Holds book with help • Turns board book pages, maybe several at a time • Activate toy after adult demonstrates • Place things in cup and then dump out contents • Demonstrate use of daily items (pretend to drink from cup) • Look to parent for reassurance in new situation • Show emerging independence, exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books with clear pictures of familiar objects • Books with pictures of familiar characters, animals, food • Books with familiar experiences, faces, family, bedtime • Books of songs • Books with repeated rhymes, phrases • Books with simple stories • Books with pictures that show how a character is feeling • Flap books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name pictures and child will repeat what you say • Ask “Where is the ___” and let child point • Listen to you saying a few sentences about the pictures • Like animal books and try to imitate the sounds they make • Points to pictures • Use expressive jargon as they turn the pages of a book • May chime in with familiar phrases • May be physically active while you read books, sometimes to show excitement • Talk about the feelings of the characters in book; relate to your child’s feelings • Like the same books repeated • Bring you a book to read 	<p><u>Print Motivation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read with your child, with a cheerful, clear voice, over and over again • Don’t worry if you child throws the book down. Say, “Let’s see what the book says.” <p><u>Phonological Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing songs; say rhymes • Say animal and other sounds • Dance to music <p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your child • Look at your child as you speak • Speak slowly, clearly, in short sentences • Use words you use in normal adult conversation • Repeat unfamiliar words • Talk about feelings <p><u>Narrative Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you talk with your child, remember to leave time for your child to talk back • Talk about what is happening in books and relate to your child’s experiences • Encourage your child to talk too <p><u>Print Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share books with your child • Have child turn pages • Point to words in title

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share briefly • Drop objects into small container • Walk backwards • Hold crayon with fingers, with hand on top • Start and stop when walking 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about how to hold the book <p><u>Letter Knowledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about things that are the same and different—real things and pictures in books • Talk about and feel shapes. • Encourage scribbling • Sing alphabet song
19 – 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assert independence • Recognize photos of family/friends • Like things OWN way • Use spoon/fork • Run; throw ball • Dance • Sing familiar songs with adults • Help around house • Imitate what you do (throw ball) • Follow simple direction (“Put it in the box.”) • Follow two-step requests (Get your toy & bring it here.) • Point to and name several body parts • Make two or three word sentences • Respond to what/where questions • Ask what/where questions • Whisper • Name familiar objects • Respond to yes/no questions • Use commands (move!) possessives (mine) • Like to repeat activities • Develop sense of humor • Sort shapes • May carry a book • Hold book with help • Turn board book pages, maybe several at a time • Name familiar objects in pictures in books • Do simple puzzles • Have temper tantrums when frustrated • Get into everything, curious • Do opposite of what is asked to do • Enjoy simple make-believe • Help put things away • Try to do many things without help • Engage in simple pretend play • Scribble with crayons • Imitate circular, vertical and horizontal strokes • Roll, pound and squeeze clay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books with pictures of familiar characters, animals • Books with familiar experiences • Books of songs • Flap books • Books with repeated rhymes, phrases • Books with simple stories • Books about colors, shapes • Books about feelings • Books on topics like transportation, ocean animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name pictures and child will repeat what you say • Listen to you saying a few sentences about the pictures • Turn book right side up • Like animal books and try to imitate the sounds they make • Use expressive jargon as they turn the pages of a book • May chime in with familiar phrases • May be physically active while you read books, sometimes to show excitement • Talk about the feelings of the characters in book; relate to your child’s feelings • Like same books repeated • Bring you a book to read 	

Age in Months	What They Do	Books	Sharing Books	Early Literacy Behaviors
25 – 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afraid of dark, monsters • Can learn to talk about feelings • Care for others • Notice how people are alike and different • Pretend play • Sequence related actions • Use pretend objects in play • Repeat fingerplay with words and actions • Play with other children, sharing sometimes • Put things in groups • Play with dough/clay • Scribble/draw • Say short sentences you can understand • Need time to respond to what you say/ask • Understand better when gestures are used with words • Sing songs • Stack six blocks • Draw vertical line • Draw a circle, a cross • Know colors • Express feelings • Dress with loose clothing • Speech understood 75% of time • Show interest in particular things • Understand when things are not “right” (You don’t wear shoes on your ears.) • Have sense of humor • Handle books to find favorite characters • Match shapes • Match colors • Match objects by color, shape, size • Point to pictures of common objects described by use (what you eat with) • Use pronouns (me, you, mine) • Copies drawing of circle • Jump over a string two inches off floor • Thread beads on string 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books with pictures of familiar characters, animals • Books that reflect their own experiences • Books with pictures depicting the action in the story • Pictures on each page • Books of songs • Books with repeated rhymes, phrases • Books with repeated phrase and/or repeated action • Books with stories • Books on topics that interest them • Books about concepts (opposites, spatial relationships, size, comparison, etc.) • Books about feelings • Books about their fears as a way of talking about them and reassuring them • True books on topics that interest them • Humorous/silly books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to you saying a few sentences about the pictures • Pretend read books to you • Chime in with familiar phrases • May be physically active while you read books, sometimes to show excitement • Understand what is said in the book even if cannot say it • Ask “What” questions: “What is this?” or “What do you see on this page?” • Have favorite books they like to hear over and over again • Like to learn from books about topics that interest them • Repeat some of the new words in books • Turn pages • Listen to stories with plot • Listen to books, sometimes only for a short time • Recite phrases • May recite story • Read familiar books themselves • Know when adult has left out a word or part of the story 	<p><u>Print Motivation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read with your child, with a cheerful, clear voice • Stop when your child loses interest; don’t turn reading time into a power struggle. • Share books again when your child is in the mood <p><u>Phonological Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing songs; say rhymes • Clap syllables of words • Read books that rhyme and say what words rhyme <p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your child; look at your child as you speak • Use words you use in normal adult conversation • Use lots of different words • Books have different words than conversation; use new words! <p><u>Narrative Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you talk with your child, remember to leave time for your child to “talk” back • Encourage your child to tell you things that happened and to tell you stories <p><u>Print Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share books with your child • Point to the words in the title as you read them • Let your child turn the pages <p><u>Letter Knowledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about things that are the same and different—real things and pictures in books • Talk about, feel and draw shapes. • Sing the alphabet song • Read some alphabet books together • Encourage scribbling and drawing

Age in Months	What They Do	Books	Sharing Books	Early Literacy Behaviors
36 - 48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know first and last name • Recite nursery rhymes • Sing songs, following you one or two lines at a time at first • Use 3 – 5 word sentences • Respond to three commands • Listen to simple story • Tell a simple story • Recall elements from stories • Name pictures of objects/items • Name colors • Sort by shape and color • Tell own age and full name • Sort objects by category (animal, food) • Understand concept of number • Tell how common objects are used • Use simple verbal analogies (Daddy is a man; Mommy is a ____) • Build bridge with 3 blocks • Relate personal experiences • Follow sequenced directions • Ask questions for information • Describe attributes of objects • Observe, describe and question • Organize pretend games (play house, tea party) • Count five objects • Draw human face • Understand in front of, behind • Gain an awareness of others • Show empathy • Respond to two unrelated commands • Begin to ask questions: who, what, why, how many • Share toys • Use object to represent something else (block is telephone) • Play group games with simple rules • Use complex speech with other children • Use vertical, horizontal and circular motions when drawing • Cut on line • Copy drawing a cross • Hold crayon between first two fingers and thumb • Form simple shapes out of clay • Hop on one foot • Walk on tiptoe for 3 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books with pictures of familiar characters, animals • Books that reflect their own experiences, comfortable, familiar • Books that help them know how to behave socially • Books where character overcomes difficulties or fears • Books with animal characters • Books with pictures depicting the action in the story • Pictures on each page • Books of songs • Books with repeated rhymes, phrases • Books with repeated phrase and/or repeated action • Books with stories than include unfamiliar words • Books about concepts (opposites, spatial relationships, size, comparison, etc.) • Books about feelings • Books of simple fantasy • True books on topics that interest them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May tell you the story of a familiar book • May like to read to you • Chimes in with familiar phrases • Ask “What” questions: “What is this?” or “What do you see on this page? What do you think is happening here?” • Have favorite books they like to hear over and over again • Like to learn from books about topics that interest them • Repeat and explain some of the new words in books • Talk about situations in the book relevant to your child • Use books to talk about what is real and what is not 	<p><u>Print Motivation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read with your child, with a cheerful, clear voice • Stop when your child loses interest; don’t turn reading time into a power struggle. • Share books again when your child is in the mood <p><u>Phonological Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing songs; say rhymes • Read books that rhyme and say what words rhyme • See if your child can recognize whether two words rhyme <p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your child; look at your child as you speak • Use words you use in normal adult conversation • Use lots of different words • Books have different words than conversation; use new words! • Read non-fiction/informational books • Choose topics of interest to you or your child and use words specific to that topic • Look words up; be curious about new words <p><u>Narrative Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you talk with your child, remember to leave time for your child to “talk” back • Encourage your child to tell you things that happened and to tell you stories • Encourage your child to tell you what s/he knows on a topic <p><u>Print Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share books with your child • Point to the words in the title as you read them • Start with the book upside down—does your child notice? Turn it the right way? • Let your child turn the pages <p><u>Letter Knowledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about things that are the same and different—real things and pictures in books • Talk about, feel and draw shapes. • Sing the alphabet song • Read some alphabet books together • Encourage scribbling and drawing • Start with letters in your child’s name

Age in Months	What They Do	Books	Sharing Books	Early Literacy Behaviors
48 - 60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with words (rhymes, repetitions, nonsense words) • Asks/give meanings to new words • Sing songs/says rhymes of 30 words or more • Use 8 word sentences • Retell stories with essential elements in logical sequence • Answer content questions about story • Ask questions • Describe past events • Describe and sort objects by shape, size and color in more than one category • Describe own activities • Use quantity terms • Build pyramid of six blocks • Play with words, create own rhyming words • Copy own name • Retell story from picture book • Know spatial concepts such as between, above, below, top, bottom • Use possessive (“cat’s, boy’s) • Identify first, last, middle • Talk about feelings • Understand rules of fair play • Wait for turn • Cut circle with scissors • Gallop, leading with one foot • Tell what will happen next • Print first name • Recognize some words • Understand words of comparison (tallest, thinnest, same, more) • Count 20 objects • Classify objects • Draw stick figures • Name more letters • Draw objects without models • Know opposites (heavy/light, loud/soft) • Talk in complete and complex sentences. • Understand seasons of the year • Like competitive games • Explain rules of game to others • Fine movements in hand • Copy drawing a square • Color within the lines • Believe thinking bad thoughts can make them happen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books that reflect their own experiences • Books of fantasy stories, larger than life • Books that are silly or with silly characters • Books to overcome fears • Books on going to doctor, hospital, new situations • Books with words of exaggeration—gigantic, colossal, outrageous • Books that explain the world • Books with detailed and complex pictures • Poetry especially funny poetry • Books with easily identifiable beginning, middle, end, that can be sequenced • Books about their fears as a way of talking about them and reassuring them • True books on topics that interest them • Humorous/silly books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use wide range of voices from loud to whispering • What if • Pretend read books to you • Can retell the story to you • Ask open-ended questions such as: What would happen if . . . What would you do if . . . How do you think that is made? How do you think it got that way? What do you think will happen • Have favorite books they like to hear over and over again • Like to learn from books about topics that interest them • Repeat and explain some of the new words in books 	<p><u>Print Motivation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read with your child, with a cheerful, clear voice • Read with distinct voices for different characters; loud voice and whisper • Stop when your child loses interest; don’t turn reading time into a power struggle. • Share books again when your child is in the mood <p><u>Phonological Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing songs; say rhymes • Read books that rhyme and say what words rhyme • Make up nonsense rhyming words • See if your child can come up with a word that rhymes with a word you say • Make up piggyback songs—new words to a familiar song/tune • Pick a two syllable word. Say it slowly sounding out each syllable, then fast to hear it normally. <p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your child; look at your child as you speak • Use words you use in normal adult conversation • Use lots of different words • Books have different words than conversation; use new words! • Read non-fiction/informational books • Choose topics of interest to you or your child and use words specific to that topic • Look words up; be curious about new words <p><u>Narrative Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask open-ended questions such as: What would happen if . . . What would you do if . . . How do you think that is made? How do you think it got that way? What do you think will happen? • Encourage your child to tell you things that happened and to tell you stories • Encourage your child to tell you what s/he knows about a topic. <p><u>Print Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share books with your child • Point to the words in the title as you read them • Say author/title of book <p><u>Letter Knowledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point out letters • Start with letters in your child’s name • Encourage your child to draw and to copy letters