

Sense of Self

Social Relations

Creative Representation

Movement

Communication and Language

Exploration and Early Logic

- A. Expressing initiative
- B. Distinguishing self from others
- C. Solving problems
- D. Developing self-help skills

Category I

Sense of Self

Through their actions with objects and interactions with trusted caregivers, infants and toddlers gradually begin to understand that they themselves exist as separate and individual beings. They begin to distinguish between *me and not me, my hand and Mommy's hand, my skin and the diaper, my foot kicking the squeaker toy, me crying and other babies crying*. With this physical self-awareness comes a sense of one's self as an actor and imitator—*I can do it* and, later, *I can do it myself!* In a supportive active learning setting, infants and toddlers construct an image of themselves as distinct and capable people who can both influence and respond to their immediate world.



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A

From birth, infants and toddlers demonstrate preferences, make choices, and assert themselves as decision makers. The more independent they become, the more able they are to face the next developmental task. Caregivers may encourage infants and toddlers to take initiative by offering them choices, such as what to eat, what to play with, or whether or not to participate in a group activity. In addition, caregivers encourage the development of initiative by supporting the choices children make on their own and convey through their actions.

Level 1. Child turns toward or away from a person or object.

Turning at this level involves simply turning the head.

- Ursula (a caregiver) was giving Mikko his bottle. When the bottle was about three-quarters empty, Mikko turned his head away from it.
- Marian (a caregiver) was holding Kelly. When Kelly's mom walked in and started speaking to Marian, Kelly turned her head toward her mom.

Level 2. Child initiates or avoids contact with a person or object.

At this level *initiates contact* involves reaching toward an object or a person. *Avoids contact* includes nonverbal no's, such as head shakes and turning the head or body away from a person or object.

- Keegan noticed his caregiver enter the room. He held out his arms to her and smiled.
- During lunch Pearl (a caregiver) offered Lance some applesauce on a spoon. He looked at it, shook his head, and turned away.

Level 3. Child moves with persistence until reaching a chosen person or object.

The behaviors seen at this level are similar to those at level 5, except at level 3 a child expresses choices through actions rather than words. The child must also make contact with the person or object he or she is trying to reach.

- Robert crawled over to Kathy (a caregiver), pulled himself up on her legs, then looked up at her and smiled.
- Anna crawled into the bottom of the Exersaucer, where her shoe was lying, picked up her shoe, and crawled back out with it.

Level 4. Child says "No!"

For an anecdote to qualify as a level 4, the child must actually say no. Nonverbal expressions of no do not meet the criteria for this level and should be rated as a level 2.

- At choice time Rose (a caregiver) offered Kevin another book. He said, "No!" and continued to look at Big Red Barn.
- At snack time Kristine (a caregiver) asked Danae if she wanted more banana. She shook her head and said, "No."

Level 5. Child expresses a choice or intention in words.

At this level the child is able to state a choice using a word or phrase to stand for actions. (See also the note under level 3.)

- At choice time Melissa (a caregiver) asked Sarah what song she would like to sing. "Monkey, Monkey," she replied.
- Carmen (a caregiver) and Alexander were playing in the kitchen area. Alexander grabbed an orange juice can and said, "I cook." After he was done he "fed" Carmen.