

LEVEL 1: Skills to Continue Building Throughout This Curriculum

Date of Pre-Test: _____

Date of Post-Test: _____

Yes, Emerging, or No?

Skill: LANGUAGE	Yes	Em	No
Speaks clearly (or receives speech therapy for articulation)			
Uses complex and compound sentences (or receives language therapy)			
Communicates with hundreds of words (or receives language therapy)			
Understands brief explanations			
Initiates and enjoys conversations			
Understands that written words represent spoken words			
Understands that letters form words			
Associates sounds with letters			
Uses grammatically correct sentences ("My dad's car is black.")			
Follows 3- or 4-step directions			
Answers questions about the characters or plot in a story after one hearing			
Can retell a simple story in proper sequence			
Begins writing letters correctly with a good pencil grip			
Begins writing simple words with correct spelling			
Begins reading simple words and sentences			
Enjoys books and reading; may enjoy writing letters, words, and numbers			
TOTAL Language – Score how many in each (Yes/Emerging/No).			

Tips to Improve Language at This Age:

- Engage him in excellent read-alouds at a level higher than books he can read. This will help him develop an ear for language, a rich vocabulary, and a knowledge of content outside his own experiences.
- Teach reading with explicit phonics-based components to teach sounds of words and rules of spelling. Conduct separate daily sessions for practicing the reading of entire words and sentences for meaning in an enjoyable context.
- Share good books together to foster a love of good books and reading.
- Engage the child in conversations about events past, present, and future.
- Teach poetry for memorization.
- Begin oral recitations.
- Use complete sentences when speaking to the child. Require complete sentences (if the child is capable of this) for dictating and scribing, such as the *My Nature Journal* or thank-you notes.
- Communicate with descriptive words and an intentionally "stretched" oral vocabulary.

Skill: COGNITIVE ABILITY	Yes	Em	No
Solves problems with reasoning abilities			
Can draw to record observations (as in a nature notebook)			
Can hear differences in pitch and match own voice to a melody line			
Memorizes surprisingly large portions of material (Psalm 23, the Lords' Prayer; names of Presidents, states and capitals; poetry)			
Begins to understand calendar concepts, such as day, week, month			
Knows the days of the week and months of the year			
Asks "why" about people, events, nature, patterns, and rules			
Identifies numerals 0-20			
Adds and subtracts with small quantities			
Identifies circle, square, rectangle, triangle, star (possibly diamond, cross)			
Can compare two objects (larger, smaller; longer, shorter)			
Can identify patterns (triangle-square-circle, triangle-square-circle)			
Begins to offer explanations for occurrences.			
TOTAL Cognitive – Score how many in each (Yes/Emerging/No).			

Tips to Improve Cognition at This Age:

- Teach reading and writing, so the child can begin to read books on his own. Read to the child above his own reading level and discuss the stories together. Introduce interesting science books (see books by Allan Fowler) and other non-fiction books for children.
- Develop memory, attention, and concentration with frequent recitations.
- Engage the child in beginning arithmetic lessons.
- Identify and discuss patterns in quilts, floor and ceiling tiles, artwork, etc.
- With beads or blocks, create patterns for the child to identify and imitate (red-blue-yellow-green, red-blue-yellow-green ... your turn).
- Develop musical ability and ear training with frequent singing; take the child to children's programs at the symphony and emphasize loud/soft contrasts, changes in tempo, and the sounds of musical instruments.
- Assign (or work with the child) 100-500 piece puzzles. Have him help with tools when fixing household items or working in the garage. Have him help in the kitchen with recipes, and measuring cups and spoons.
- Provide a daily calendar overview of the day, week, and month. Include observation, such as a picture of sun/cloud/rain for the child to attach to the calendar each day. Have an outdoor thermometer for recording the daily temperature. Note patterns or seasonal changes.

Skill: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (manners, behavior, service to others)	Yes	Em	No
Begins to understand cause and effect with the emotions of others ("He dropped his ice cream cone. He felt sad.")			
Understands "good" (talking through) and "bad" (hitting, biting) ways of managing frustration and resolving social conflicts			
Gains greater control over his own emotions in public places			
Uses "please," "thank you," and "excuse me"			
Asks other children and adults to forgive him when he has wronged them			
Forgives others who tell him they are sorry for what they have done			
Shares his toys when other children come over to play			
Follows rules in a group (lining up, taking turns, following directions)			
Sometimes acts as "peacekeeper" in the conflicts of others			
Learns to answer the telephone ("Hello, ____'s residence. ____ speaking.")			
Understands his own need for quiet time or other means of coping when agitated or distressed (talking about problems, going to his room, painting or playing music)			
Is becoming a thoughtful person to his friends and family			
TOTAL Social-Emotional – Score how many in each (Yes/Emerging/No).			

Tips to Improve Social-Emotional Development at This Age:

- Note the precursors to emotions in stories. Elicit understanding with questioning. ("Why do you think Charlotte was worried?" "How did Wilbur feel when everyone admired him at the fair?")
- Read books in which children treat each other respectfully (Boxcar Children series) and in which gentle manners are modeled (Little Bear).
- Discuss the feelings of other children following playdates or outings. ("Did you notice Andrew after he hit the homerun? How could you tell he was very happy?")
- Cultivate empathy and thoughtfulness through helping the child send cards, bake brownies, or bring flowers when older adults in church, the family, or the neighborhood are ill or grieving.
- Limit television, video games, and movies. Replace with outdoor activity, exercise, and nature walks to move the body in productive ways and calm the mind.
- Model respectful discourse within the family.
- If the child struggles with anxiety, anger, or rages, keep outside demands and pressures to a minimum. Allow the family (or the particular child) to establish a more relaxed, "low-key" approach to scheduling days and weeks.
- Read the chapter on Behavior in *Simply Classical: A Beautiful Education for Any Child* for more help in this critical area.

Skill: FINE-MOTOR SKILLS (small muscle dexterity, pre-writing)	Yes	Em	No
Writes with a good pencil grip			
When necessary, relaxes (or tightens) pencil grip with reminders			
Dresses and undresses self and dolls/stuffed animals without assistance			
Brushes or combs hair without assistance			
Plays with small cars, tiny dolls, or toys that have small pieces or parts			
Colors within lines			
Paints with watercolors and brushes			
Writes legible letters and numbers			
Writes words with good spacing in between			
Writes letters and numbers on the line			
Writes letters and words from top to bottom			
Writes words from left to right			
Enjoys puzzles, smaller blocks (Legos), sticker books, and mazes			
Uses fork and spoon to feed himself			
Can cut foods with a knife and fork			
TOTAL Fine-Motor Skills – Score how many in each (Yes/Emerging/No).			

Tips to Improve Fine-Motor Skills at This Age:

- Create a paper chain for reading. Each time he reads a new book, he can add another link to his paper chain. (Bonus – encourages reading!)
- Provide time for simple mazes, dot-to-dots, stencils, and coloring books with high-quality colored pencils. Add rubber pencil grips in the bin if the child finds these helpful.
- Give the child gifts to encourage fine-motor practice in enjoyable ways, such as sticker packs or sticker books, for peeling and sticking.
- Provide an "Etch-a-Sketch" or "Magna-Doodle" for traveling.
- Practice writing with hand-over-hand help if needed. Provide paper with raised lines to provide more "feedback" with letter formation.
- Find crafts the child enjoys (card-making, stamping, scrapbooking, drawing, leatherwork). Provide supplies and time to engage in the hobby.
- Have the child fold napkins and set the table before each meal, fold laundry, sort and match socks, cook, bake, empty the utensils from the dishwasher, and help with other "fine-motor" chores when possible.
- Consider an evaluation by a registered occupational therapist for significant fine-motor difficulties or delays.

Skill: GROSS-MOTOR SKILLS (large muscle coordination, strength, balance)	Yes	Em	No
Walks upstairs and downstairs without assistance, alternating steps, or rail			
Demonstrates a preference for right or left side when batting, kicking			
Can "walk like a bear" forward and backward			
Skips, gallops, runs, twirls, jumps			
Turns several forward somersaults unassisted			
Can perform knee drops and seat drops on a trampoline			
Can move forward unassisted on monkey bars			
Enjoys climbing, sliding, running, and playing outside			
Rides a tricycle unassisted			
Rides a bicycle with or without training wheels			
Can jump over objects with two feet			
Hops forward and backward on one foot			
Throws ball overhand with developing form			
TOTAL Gross-Motor Skills – Score how many in each (Yes/Emerging/No).			

Tips to Improve Gross-Motor Skills at This Age:

- Arrange playdates at the playground for running, climbing, jumping, sliding, racing, swinging from bars, using monkey bars.
- Play low-pressure backyard golf, soccer, football, baseball, wiffle ball, kickball, tag, hide-and-seek, or go hiking and camping.
- Enroll the child in youth sports camps, homeschool sports, or physical education classes during the school year or summer. Consider basketball, soccer, football, t-ball, softball, baseball, field hockey or gym hockey, or volleyball. (Bonus - Social/Emotional)
- If team sports prove difficult because of social or physical challenges, consider lessons and competitions in individual sports (golf, tennis, swimming, disc golf, gymnastics, dance, archery, skiing, skating).
- If more appropriate for the child, locate special-needs sports such as those offered through some YMCA locations, www.ymca.net. The new Special Olympics Young Athlete program for ages 3-7, www.specialolympics.org or the Challenger programs, such as Challenger Basketball or Challenger Baseball, www.bcchallenger.org, might also be a better fit.
- When purchasing toys for the child with gross-motor delays, consider "gross-motor toys" or "kid fitness" or "physical development" sections of websites such as www.educationaltoysplanet.com.
- Provide electronic exercise options (ballet DVDs, Wii) for indoor use.
- Consider an evaluation by a registered physical therapist for significant gross-motor difficulties or delays. Provide postural supports for schoolwork such as those available through www.Therapro.com.