



# LEARNING to LEARN:

FOUNDATION SKILLS

for

INFANTS, TODDLERS, and

PRESCHOOLERS

Southwest SELPA

2009

*Learning to Learn Protocol:  
Foundation Skills for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers*

Contents	Page
Learning to Learn Skills Defined	2
Directions: How to Use These Protocols	2
How Were These Protocols Developed?	3
Who Developed These Protocols?	3
Foundation Skills for Infants and Toddlers (Birth – 3 Years)	4 - 12
Foundation Skills for Preschoolers (18 Months to 5 Years)	13 - 19

## *Learning to Learn Protocol: Foundation Skills for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers*

### **WHAT ARE THE LEARNING to LEARN SKILLS?**

During the months and years of early development, infants and toddlers are learning three skills known as the Learning-to-Learn skills. These skills are ***Imitation, Attention, and Behavioral Cooperation/Compliance***. These skills are prerequisites for incidental and structured learning. These skills, when adequately developed relative to the age of the child, support age-level learning, problem-solving, reasoning and thinking. Children who are developing these skills typically do not require specialized instruction in these areas. Children, who are not developing these skills on their own, through maturation and interaction with family members and peers within their environments, do need to be specifically taught these skills.

***Attention*** is the ability to maintain purposeful focus over time, environments and people. Attention is necessary for children to develop good memories and to help them master play and learning tasks (i.e., children have to pay attention in order to learn).

***Imitation*** is the ability to purposefully mimic verbal, visual, or motor information. It is how children take in information, use and practice what they see and hear; and, learn new things. Imitation skills help children expand their play, language, behavior, and social skills.

***Behavioral Cooperation/Compliance*** is the ability to follow age-appropriate directions, requests, and rules. Cooperation is an activity that involves the willing and intentional interdependence of a child with an adult or other children. Cooperation is essential to being successful in individual and group learning. Cooperation supports new learning with practice over time, increased self-esteem and confidence with success and a willingness to maintain compliance across tasks and settings.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- This is an observation tool to assist teachers in determining if a child has developed age-appropriate learning-to-learn skills.
- Children should be observed during their daily routines within the home, classroom and/or other school/home environments.
- The presence (+), absence (-), or emergence (e) of skills within any of the three areas is documented after multiple observations of the child within each home visit/school day and across home visits/school days.
- Areas of concern (i.e., the absence of age-level learning skills) in any of the three skill areas should be addressed through the IFSP or IEP process via the development of outcomes or goals and objectives that focus home/classroom teaching activities/tasks on the child's area(s) of need.

## HOW WERE THESE PROTOCOLS DEVELOPED?

The *Infant Toddler Protocol* represents the birth to three years (0 – 3) of age timeframe to ensure that the development of the learning to learn skills (or absence thereof) can be documented from the outset. The *Preschool Protocol* begins with 18 months and extends to 5 years of age. This is to ensure that all preschoolers are represented relative to the development of their learning to learn skills.

Skill items for this Learning-to-Learn protocol were compiled from the following infant/toddler and preschool assessment tools:

- ◆ *The Carolina Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs (Third Edition)*
- ◆ *The Carolina Curriculum for Preschoolers with Special Needs (Second Edition)*
- ◆ *Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) for Preschoolers: Ages 3 – 6 Years*
- ◆ *Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) Birth Through Three*
- ◆ *Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children: AEPS Measurement of Birth to Three*
- ◆ *Responding to Infants: The Infant Activity Manual 6 – 30 Months*

## WHO DEVELOPED THESE PROTOCOLS?

This protocol was developed collaboratively by Infant/Toddler and Preschool Specialists from the Southwest SELPA ~

Jennifer Fisher, MA Preschool Special Education Teacher, Behavior Specialist  
Torrance Unified School District

Elizabeth Leandres, MA, BCBA Preschool Specialist, SW SELPA Behavioral Supervisor  
Southwest SELPA/Los Angeles Count Office of Education

Mary Ann Clark, PhD, LEP SW SELPA Early Start Coordinator, Director of Parent  
Professional Support and Training  
Southwest SELPA

*Southwest SELPA  
Learning to Learn Protocol:  
Foundation Skills for Infants and Toddlers (Birth – 3 Years)*

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Annual IFSP Date \_\_\_\_\_

**IMITATION** is the ability to purposefully mimic verbal, visual, or motor information. Imitation is a learning strategy through which children acquire and master new behaviors. It is how children take in information, use and practice what they see and hear. Imitation skills help children expand play, language, behavior, and social skills.

Age Range (months)	Verbal/Vocal Imitation	IFSP Review Updates		
		Baseline	6 Month Review	Annual Review
0 - 3	◆ Quiets to voice			
	◆ Looks at person who is talking			
3 - 6	◆ Repeats sounds, just made when imitated by caregiver			
	◆ Shifts sounds (i.e., imitates sounds in repertoire when made by caregiver)			
	◆ Imitates inflection			
6 - 9	◆ Imitates familiar gesture (i.e., gesture the infant can see and is in repertoire, e.g., patting head)			
	◆ Experiments with making own mouth move like that of an adult			
	◆ Attempts to match new sounds			
9 - 12	◆ Imitates new gesture that is not part of repertoire (i.e., reproductions frequently not accurate, e.g., rubbing)			
	◆ Imitates familiar two-syllable words without syllable changes			
	◆ Imitates familiar two-syllable words with syllable changes			

Age Range (months)	Verbal/Vocal Imitation (Cont.)	IFSP Review Updates		
		Baseline	6 Month Review	Annual Review
12 - 15	♦ Imitates several new gestures (at least three; immediately and accurately)			
	♦ Imitates most novel one-syllable words (i.e., not frequently used)			
	♦ Imitates a variety of novel two-syllable words (i.e., not frequently used)			
	♦ Imitates familiar words overheard in conversation or from books			
15 - 18	♦ Imitates/approximates <i>invisible</i> gesture (i.e., unfamiliar movements not visible to the toddler such as wrinkling nose, pulling earlobe, patting head)			
	♦ Imitates the vocalizations others use for environmental sounds			
18 - 21	♦ Imitates at least three <i>invisible</i> and unfamiliar gestures (with one accurately and directly)			
	♦ Imitates modeled two-word phrases or sentences (Credit <i>More juice, Hi Daddy</i> ) (Do not credit: <i>Thank you, Bye-Bye, Good girl</i> )			
21 - 24	♦ Imitates three-syllable words (or two-word phrases containing three syllables)			
24 - 30	♦ Imitates novel two-word or two-number sequence			
30 - 36	♦ Imitates three-word sentences			

Age Range (months)	Movement/Motor Imitation	IFSP Review Updates		
		Baseline	6 Month Review	Annual Review
0 - 3	♦ Looks at caregiver and makes facial movements when caregiver is talking or making noises			
3 - 6	♦ Continues movement if it is initiated by caregiver			
	♦ Imitates an activity in repertoire after observing caregiver doing that activity			
6 - 9	♦ Imitates simple and familiar gestures (signals <i>bye-bye</i> or <i>no</i> )			
9 - 12	♦ Imitates frequently observed actions with familiar objects (e.g., stirs with spoon)			
	♦ Imitates new or novel gestures			
	♦ Imitates unfamiliar movements or movements not commonly used			
12 - 15	♦ Imitates actions related to the function of objects			
	♦ Imitates gestures or signs caregiver commonly uses			
	♦ Imitates at least three new gestures			
15 - 18	♦ Imitates activities involving a combination of objects several hours after observing actions			
	♦ Imitates/approximates <i>invisible</i> gesture (i.e., not visible to self - wrinkling nose, pulling earlobe, patting head)			
	♦ Imitates/approximates at least three <i>invisible</i> , unfamiliar gestures (one accurate and direct)			

Age Range (months)	Movement/Motor Imitation (Cont.)	IFSP Review Updates		
		Baseline	6 Month Review	Annual Review
18 – 21	◆ Incorporates sequence of imitated adult activities into solitary play (i.e., housework, real-life activities)			
	◆ Imitates modeled vertical stroke (i.e., upward or downward stroke in a general vertical direction)			
21 - 24	◆ Attempts to solve problems by imitating adult model/actions (including activating toys)			
	◆ Imitates modeled circular scribble (can be continuous circles)			
24 - 30	◆ Imitates postures or actions that do not involve props			
	◆ Imitates horizontal stroke (can switch the direction of marks to imitate a horizontal stroke)			
30 - 36	◆ Imitates sequence of two unrelated motor acts			
	◆ Imitates a cross after model			

**ATTENTION:** the ability to maintain purposeful focus across time, environments and people. Children pay attention and they develop short-term and long-term memory and complete play and learning tasks (i.e., children have to pay attention to learn). Attention develops in this sequence: (1) *orienting/focused attention* (the ability to analyze, synthesize and coordinate specific visual, auditory or tactile information); (2) *sustained attention*; (the ability to maintain a consistent response during continuous and repetitive activity); and, (3) *executive attention* (cognition that is independent of incoming sensory data or motor responses, i.e., the ability to control thoughts and actions to produce coherent behavior, maintain behavioral goals, and use the goals as a basis for choosing what aspects of the environment to attend to and which action to select).

Age Range (months)	Orienting/Sustained Attention: Visual and Auditory	IFSP Review Updates		
		Baseline	6 Month Review	Annual Review
0 - 3	♦ Quiets when presented with noise			
	♦ Visually searches for sound			
	♦ Turns head and searches for or reaches toward sound at ear level while on back			
	♦ Shows anticipation of regularly occurring events in everyday care			
3 - 6	♦ Turns head or reaches to sound			
	♦ Turns to the direction from which name is being called			
	♦ Orients to new sound			
	♦ Stops activity when name is called			
6 - 9	♦ Orients to either side for 2 sounds			
	♦ Anticipates frequently occurring events in familiar games-first trial			
	♦ Follows gaze direction of familiar adult to object or person			
9 - 12	♦ Recognizes familiar toys, people, and places			
	♦ Listens/orients to speech (without being distracted by other sources least 10 seconds)			
12 - 15	♦ Actively searches for source of sound when sound is not visible			
	♦ Sitting on a caregiver's lap, attends to picture book for 90 seconds, patting the pictures or otherwise indicating interest			

Age Range (months)	Orienting/Sustained Attention: Visual and Auditory (Cont.)	IFSP Review Updates		
		Baseline	6 Month Review	Annual Review
18 - 21	♦ Notices when objects, toys, clothing is not in the correct place			
	♦ Turns pages in book when looking with an adult			
	♦ Uses distal point (i.e., one finger extended) to attend to pictures in a book or objects in the environment			
	♦ Joint attention (i.e., gaze shift, pointing, vocalizing to/with another) is consistent and shared			
21 - 24	♦ Anticipates parts of rhymes or songs			
	♦ Attends to objects, people, events			
	♦ Anticipates frequently occurring events in familiar toys, games, activities after two or three trials by their sounds			
24 - 30	♦ Joins in saying nursery rhymes (repeats parts of them)			
	♦ Joins in saying or singing at least two nursery rhymes or songs in a group with an adult			
30 – 36	♦ Notices and reacts to changes in familiar rhymes, songs, or stories			
	♦ Completes task with some attention and reinforcing			

**BEHAVIORAL COOPERATION/COMPLIANCE** is the ability to follow age-appropriate directions, requests, and rules. Cooperation involves the willing and intentional interdependence of a child with an adult or with other children. Cooperation is essential for individual and group learning. Cooperation with directions allows for new learning with practice over time, increased self-esteem and confidence with success and a willingness to maintain compliance across tasks and settings.

Age Range (months)	Cooperation/Compliance	IFSP Review Updates		
		Baseline	6 Month Review	Annual Review
0 – 3	♦ Quiets/calms when picked up			
	♦ Responds to a variety of sounds			
	♦ Molds and relaxes body when held; cuddles			
	♦ Can be comforted by being spoken to, held, or rocked			
3 – 6	♦ Shows pleasure when touched and handled			
	♦ Stops crying with attention			
	♦ Comforts self			
6 - 9	♦ Entertains self with toys for short periods of time			
	♦ Participates in simple games			
9 - 12	♦ Moves away from the primary caregiver who is in the same room			
	♦ Tests adults reactions during feeding (e.g., throwing food or utensils; spitting, playing with food)			
	♦ Knows what “no-no” means and reacts (briefly inhibits, cries, puckers lip, etc)			
	♦ Cooperates in undressing and dressing			
	♦ Complies with “Give me” at least half of all requests			
12 - 15	♦ Gets toys for play from box or shelf			
	♦ Spontaneously shares with adults			

Age Range (months)	Behavioral Cooperation/ Compliance (Cont.)	IFSP Review Updates		
		Baseline	6 Month Review	Annual Review
15 - 18	♦ Needs and expects rituals and routines (e.g., only eats with certain bib; only sleep after story)			
	♦ Tries to please others			
	♦ Says “No” or indicates refusal instead of demonstrating inappropriate refusal (e.g., running away, screaming, throwing, etc.)			
18 - 21	♦ Helps with a variety of simple tasks (e.g., household, classroom)			
	♦ Cooperates with diaper changing/bathroom routine			
	♦ Plays parallel (i.e., plays next to other children doing similar activity; some interaction, e.g., toy exchange)			
21 - 24	♦ Remembers where objects belong; puts things away upon request			
	♦ Tolerates being taking into a variety of environments			
	♦ Cooperates with words used to inhibit actions (e.g., <i>wait, stop, get down, my turn</i> )			
24 – 30	♦ Demonstrates awareness of class routines with environmental or verbal clues (e.g., song for snack time; outdoor play after circle time)			
	♦ Holds parent’s hand outdoors and avoids common dangers			
	♦ Play alongside/comfortably with an adult-assigned activity in small group of children for 5-7 minutes			
	♦ Says “No,” but complies 50% of time even if he/she says “no”			
	♦ Follows two-part related directions (e.g. <i>Get your book and put it on the chair</i> )			

Age Range (months)	Behavioral Cooperation/ Compliance (Cont.)	IFSP Review Updates		
		Baseline	6 Month Review	Annual Review
30 - 36	♦ Begins to obey and respect simple rules – understands consequences; tries to please			
	♦ Participates cooperatively in circle games (e.g., <i>Ring Around the Rosy</i> ; <i>London Bridges</i> ; <i>Duck, Duck, Goose</i> )			
	♦ Works collaboratively toward a goal with peers (e.g., cleaning up the housekeeping area)			
	♦ Requests permission from an adult to use a toy, have a turn, etc.			
	♦ Shows guilt or shame over accidents or prohibited behavior			
	♦ With prompt, shows care in handling small animals or potentially breakable objects			

**Southwest SELPA**  
**Learning to Learn Protocol:**  
**Foundation Skills for Preschoolers (18 Months to 5 Years)**

**Child's Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher's Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Annual IEP Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**IMITATION** is the ability to purposefully mimic verbal, visual, or motor information. Imitation is a learning strategy through which children acquire and master new behaviors. It is how children take in information, use and practice what they see and hear. Imitation skills help children expand play, language, behavior, and social skills.

Age Range (months)	Verbal/Vocal Imitation	Progress Reports			
		Baseline 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Annual 4
18 - 21	♦ Imitates at least three unfamiliar ( <i>invisible</i> ) gestures not visible to self (wrinkling nose, pulling earlobe, patting head)				
	♦ Imitates modeled two-word phrases or sentences ( <i>Credit More juice, Hi Daddy</i> ) (Do not credit: <i>Thank you, Bye-Bye, Good girl</i> )				
21 - 24	♦ Imitates three-syllable words (or two-word phrases containing three syllables)				
24 - 30	♦ Imitates novel two-word or two-number sequence				
30 - 36	♦ Imitates three-word sentences				
36 - 42	♦ Imitates three unsequenced numbers or three unrelated words				
42 - 48	♦ Imitates four-word sentences including adjectives				
48 - 54	♦ Imitates five- to six-word sentences with grammatical structure				
54 - 60	♦ Imitates novel sequences of four numbers or four unrelated words				

Age Range (months)	Movement/Motor Imitation	Progress Reports			
		Baseline 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Annual 4
18 - 21	♦ Incorporates sequence of imitated adult activities into solitary play (i.e., housework, real-life activities)				
	♦ Imitates modeled vertical stroke (i.e., upward or downward stroke in a general vertical direction)				
21 - 24	♦ Attempts to solve problems by imitating adult model/actions (including activating toys)				
	♦ Imitates modeled circular scribble (can be continuous circles)				
24 - 30	♦ Imitates postures or actions that do not involve props				
	♦ Imitates horizontal stroke (can switch the direction of marks to imitate a horizontal stroke)				
30 - 36	♦ Imitates sequence of two unrelated motor acts				
	♦ Imitates a cross				
36 - 42	♦ Repeats three unrelated motor activities (modeled one at a time)				
42 - 48	♦ Imitates simple finger plays (both hands doing similar actions)				
48 - 54	♦ Imitates finger plays (each hand doing different actions)				
54 - 60	♦ Imitates complex motor activities in songs and games				

**ATTENTION:** is the ability to maintain purposeful focus across time, environments and people. Children pay attention and they develop short-term and long-term memory and complete play and learning tasks (i.e., children have to pay attention to learn). Attention develops in this sequence: (1) *orienting/focused attention* (the ability to analyze, synthesize and coordinate specific visual, auditory or tactile information); (2) *sustained attention* (the ability to maintain a consistent response during continuous and repetitive activity); and, (3) *executive attention* (cognition that is independent of incoming sensory data or motor responses, i.e., the ability to control thoughts and actions to produce coherent behavior, maintain behavioral goals, and use the goals as a basis for choosing what aspects of the environment to attend to and which action to select).

Age Range (months)	Orienting/Focused Attention: Visual and Auditory	Progress Reports			
		Baseline 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Annual 4
18 - 21	◆ Notices when objects, toys, clothing is not in the correct place				
	◆ Turns pages in book when looking with an adult				
	◆ Uses distal point to attend to pictures in a book or objects in the environment				
	◆ Joint attention (i.e., gaze shift, pointing, vocalizing) is consistent and shared				
Age Range (months)	Sustained Attention: Visual and Auditory	Progress Reports			
		Baseline 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Annual 4
21 - 24	◆ Anticipates parts of rhymes or songs				
	◆ Attends to objects, people and events				
	◆ Anticipates frequently occurring events in familiar toys, games, activities after two or three trials by their sounds				
24 - 30	◆ Joins in saying nursery rhymes (repeats parts of them)				
	◆ Joins in saying or singing at least two nursery rhymes or songs in a group with an adults				

Age Range (months)	Sustained Attention: Visual and Auditory (Cont.)	Progress Reports			
		Baseline 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Annual 4
30 - 36	◆ Notices and reacts to changes in familiar rhymes, songs, or stories				
	◆ Completes task with some attention and reinforcing				
36 - 42	◆ Attends to a picture cue to complete a familiar task				
	◆ Attends to sounds or words or seeks to identify who or what something is in the environment				
42 - 48	◆ Starts a task only when reminded, some prompting				
	◆ Attends to task without supervision				
	◆ Remains on task when distractions are present				
48 - 54	◆ Starts task with no reminders or prompting				
	◆ Attends to task without supervision for 10 minutes				
54 - 60	◆ Works in small group for 5 – 10 minutes				
	◆ Remains on task for 5 to 10 minutes when distractions are present				

**BEHAVIORAL COOPERATION/COMPLIANCE** is the ability to follow age-appropriate directions, requests, and rules. Cooperation involves the willing and intentional interdependence of a child with an adult or other children. Cooperation is essential for successful individual and group learning. Cooperation with directions allows for new learning with practice over time, increased self-esteem and confidence with success and a willingness to maintain compliance across tasks and settings.

Age Range (months)	Behavioral Cooperation/ Compliance	Progress Reports			
		Baseline 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Annual 4
18 - 21	◆ Helps with a variety of simple tasks (e.g., household, classroom)				
	◆ Cooperates with diaper changing/bathroom routine				
	◆ Plays parallel (i.e., plays next to other children doing similar activity; some interaction, e.g., toy exchange)				
21 - 24	◆ Remembers where objects belong and puts things away upon request				
	◆ Tolerates being taking into a variety of environments				
	◆ Cooperates with words used to inhibit actions ( <i>wait, stop, get down, my turn</i> )				
24 - 30	◆ Demonstrates awareness of class routines with environmental or verbal clues (e.g., song for snack time; outdoor play after circle time)				
	◆ Holds parent's hand outdoors and avoids common dangers				
	◆ Play alongside/comfortably with an adult-assigned activity in a small group of children for 5-7 minutes				
	◆ Says "No," but complies 50% of time even if he/she says no				
	◆ Follows two-part related direction ( <i>Get your hat and out it on</i> )				

Age Range (months)	Behavioral Cooperation/ Compliance (Cont.)	Progress Reports			
		Baseline 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Annual 4
30 - 36	◆ Begins to obey and respect simple rules – understands consequences; tries to please				
	◆ Participates cooperatively in circle games (e.g., <i>Ring Around the Rose</i> ; <i>London Bridges</i> ; <i>Duck, Duck, Goose</i> )				
	◆ Works collaboratively toward a goal with peers (e.g., cleaning up the housekeeping area)				
	◆ Requests permission from an adult to use a toy, have a turn, etc.				
	◆ Shows guilt or shame over accidents or prohibited behavior				
36 - 42	◆ Follows rules given by an adults for new activities or simple games				
	◆ Adapts readily/cooperatively to change in routine				
	◆ Caries out two simple unrelated successive commands in sequence (e.g., <i>Put the toy away and get your back pack</i> )				
	◆ Cooperate with peers to develop a theme for peer-directed play				
42 - 48	◆ Sits quietly listening to stories, music, TV, videos, etc. in a small group				
	◆ Works cooperatively in small group for 5 – 10 minutes				
	◆ With prompt, shows care in handling small animals or potentially breakable objects				

Age Range (months)	Behavioral Cooperation/ Compliance (Cont.)	Progress Reports			
		Baseline 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Annual 4
48 - 54	♦ Asks permission to use other people's belongings				
	♦ Plays cooperatively with peers (i.e., games with rules) for extended periods without requiring adult intervention				
	♦ Carries out 4 simple related successive directions in order				
	♦ Behaves according to the desires of others				
	♦ After active play, upon request: sits down, remains seated, stops talking, waits for further instruction				
	♦ Complies with instructions given in a small group				
54 - 60	♦ Complies with 3 simple related successive requests in order				
	♦ Spontaneously takes turns and shares				
	♦ Plans/creates games that have rules with peers				
	♦ Sits in seat, stands in line without excess movement during an activity				
	♦ Follows defined rules whether or not an authority figure is present				
	♦ Conforms with group decisions (at least three children – may initially protest but will go along)				