Human development is a set of cognitive and physical processes, which move from simple to more complex abilities and understandings. These processes happen gradually over time, from infancy to adulthood. In early childhood these are labelled benchmarks, such as rolling over, crawling, walking (physical) and the initiation of language and communication (cognitive). Human development is both internal and social in nature. The internal component is the individual's emotions and self-regulation abilities and sense of "readiness" for a skill, which attributes to their willingness or intrinsic motivation to attempt skills or internally organize and understand concepts. The social component of development is based on a human’s exposure to specific environments (e.g. the home, school, and the community) and people (e.g. family, friends, teachers, mentors etc.) that enable opportunities for learning experiences and creating understanding. While specific age-markers are often attributed to different physical skills and cognitive processes during infancy and early childhood, I believe it is important to consider each human’s individual level of readiness and willingness and their history of social interactions and exposures to different environments throughout life.

Learning is integral to development and happens throughout a person’s life in both informal and formal settings. As a primary teacher, I believe designating specific age or grade-levels for learning certain skills or concepts should be done with caution. Many complex factors influence the development of children and affect the timeline of an individual’s learning. For example, in B.C., the traditional approach to learning to formally read is emphasized in grade one and there are often concerns raised if a child does not demonstrate basic reading skills by the end of year. Conversely, in several Scandinavian countries reading is not critical until the upper primary years. The range and timeline for learning must be broad both in age and scope.