



Gan Ami Framework for Early Education



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Gan Ami at Temple Beth Ami
Framework for Early Education

“The most important and decisive age in education is early childhood” - Yesodot ha Chinuch

At Gan Ami, children acquire skills in six areas of development which together allow them to establish the endurance, executive functioning and play abilities necessary for future academic and social success.

Endurance: The ability to do everything longer, including sitting, attending, writing, conversing and focusing.

Executive Functioning: The combination of effortful self-control, working memory, and flexible thinking that allows for organization, planning and the synthesis of information and ideas.

Play: The creativity and team-work required to learn with others, expand ideas, develop new concepts, and use one's body and mind to investigate the world.

“Teach Each Child According to His Way” - Proverbs 22:6

Throughout their years at Gan Ami, each child progresses along their own developmental paths in the areas of Communication, Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills, Problem-Solving, Personal and Social Development. For each of these developmental areas, we expect there to be variation among the children as well as within each individual child. At Gan Ami, we know that every child develops at their own pace, and teachers support each child's path toward success.

“What is learned in early childhood is absorbed in the blood” - Avot de Rabbi Natan

The following pages illustrate the skills that children are working to attain in each area of development during their time at Gan Ami. Following are our overarching goals for each age group:

Bet children work to separate successfully from caregivers, adapt to classroom routines and expectations, and become independent learners.

Gimel children work to join with others in play, navigate through challenges, and interact as a good friend and helpful teammate.

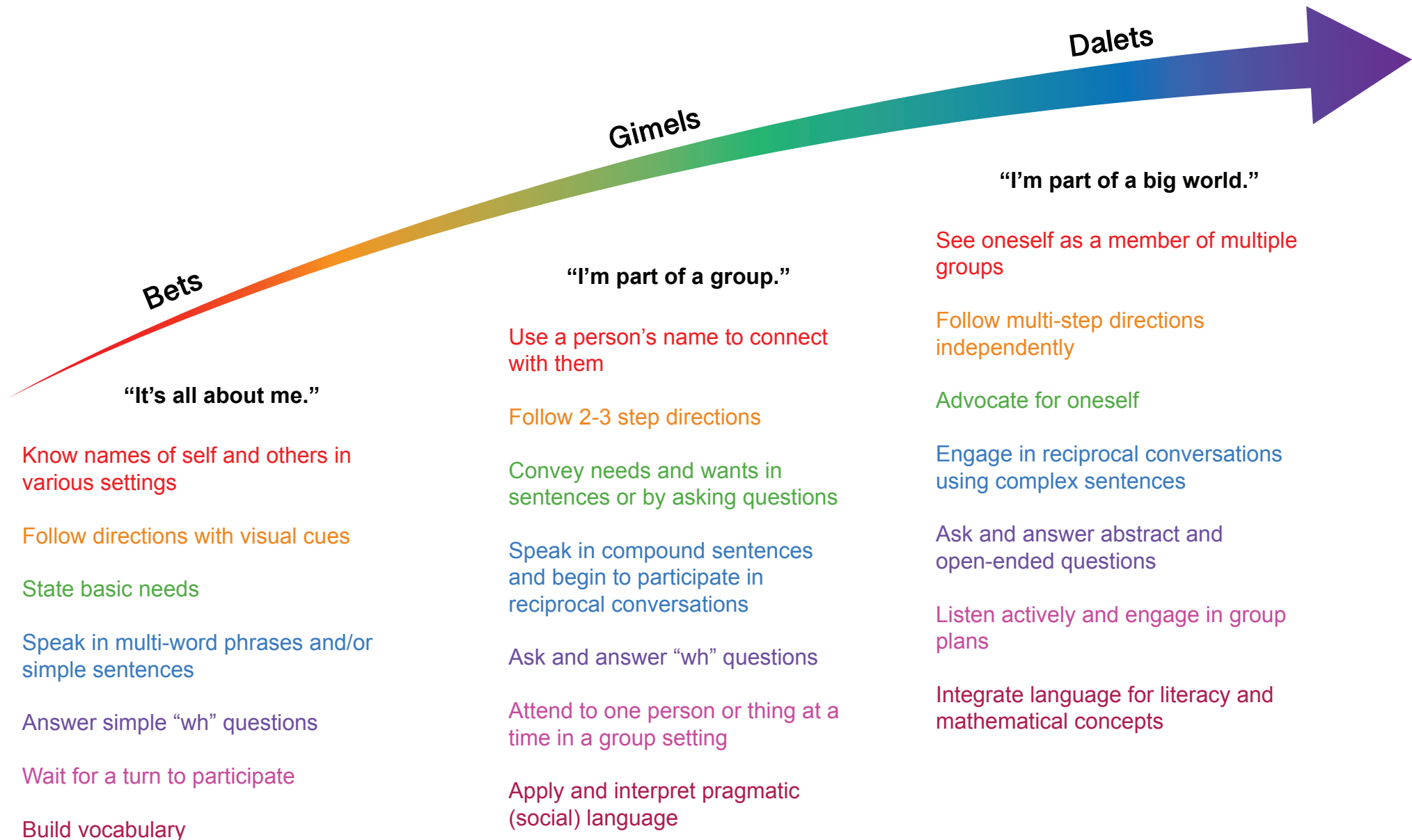
Dalet children prepare for future academic, intellectual and social pursuits by becoming more self-sufficient, confident and able to manage multi-faceted environments.

“All your children shall be students of Adonai” - Isaiah 54:13

At Gan Ami, learning takes place within a joyful Jewish environment. Children engage with our fun, diverse culture and rich religion which encourages us to explore our faith, treat others with honor and respect, and make the world a better place for all. Children are introduced to the values and practices of Reform Judaism.

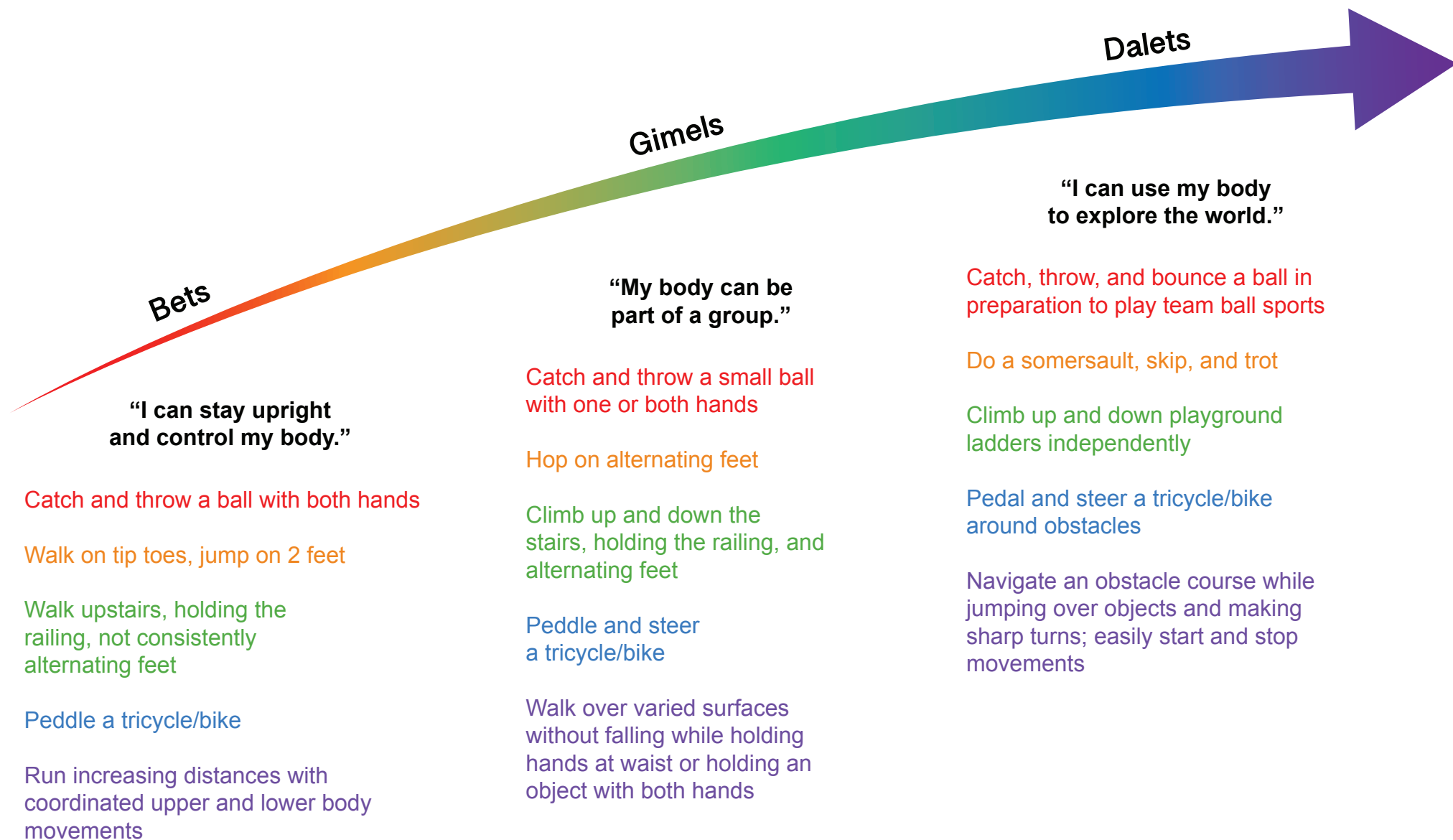
COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Intentionally exchange verbal and nonverbal information,
both as a sender and as a receiver.



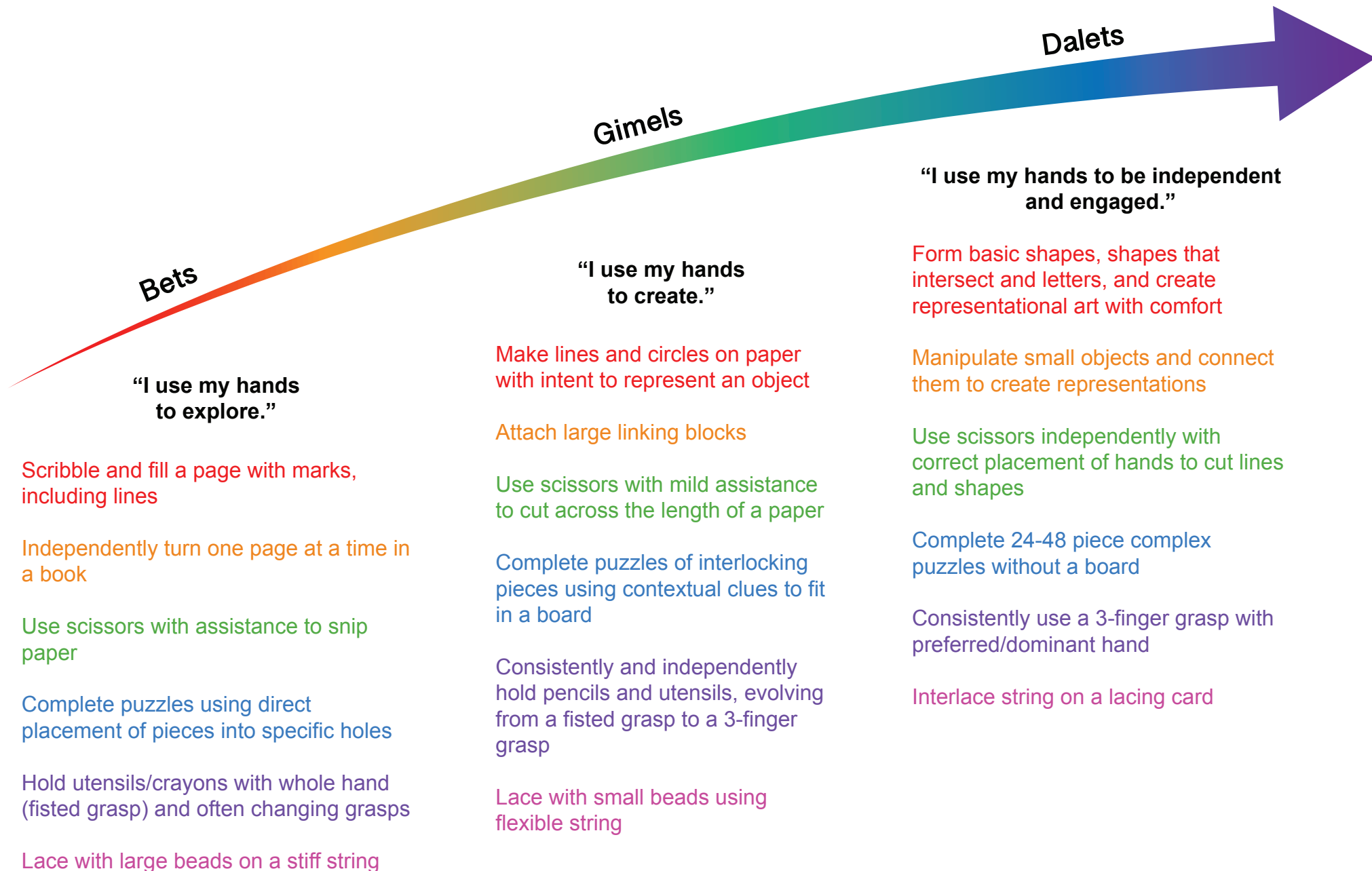
GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Gain the agility and large-muscle control needed to maneuver around spaces with myriad physical obstacles and challenges.



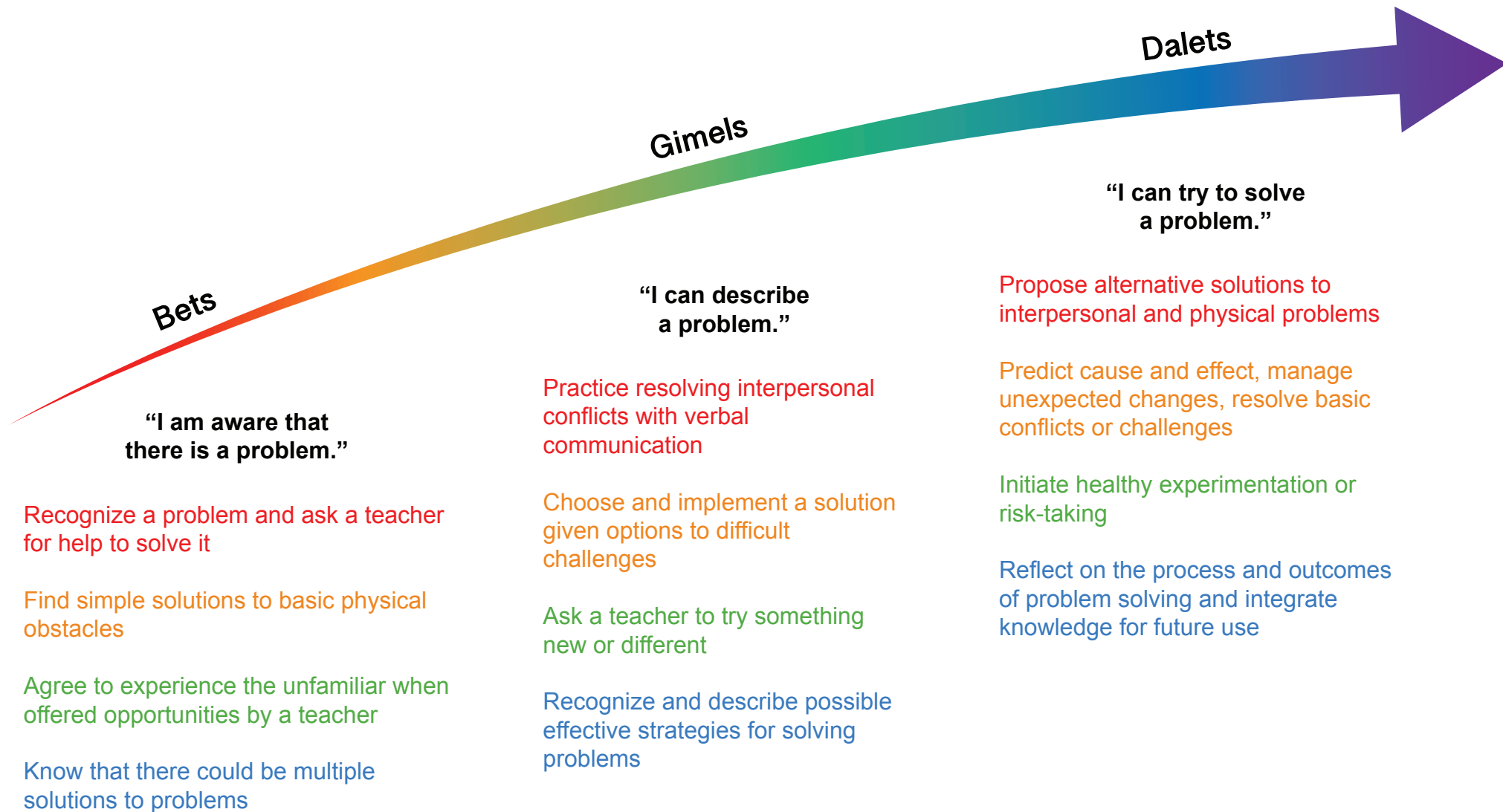
FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Use fingers and hands to hold and manipulate tools, utensils and small objects.



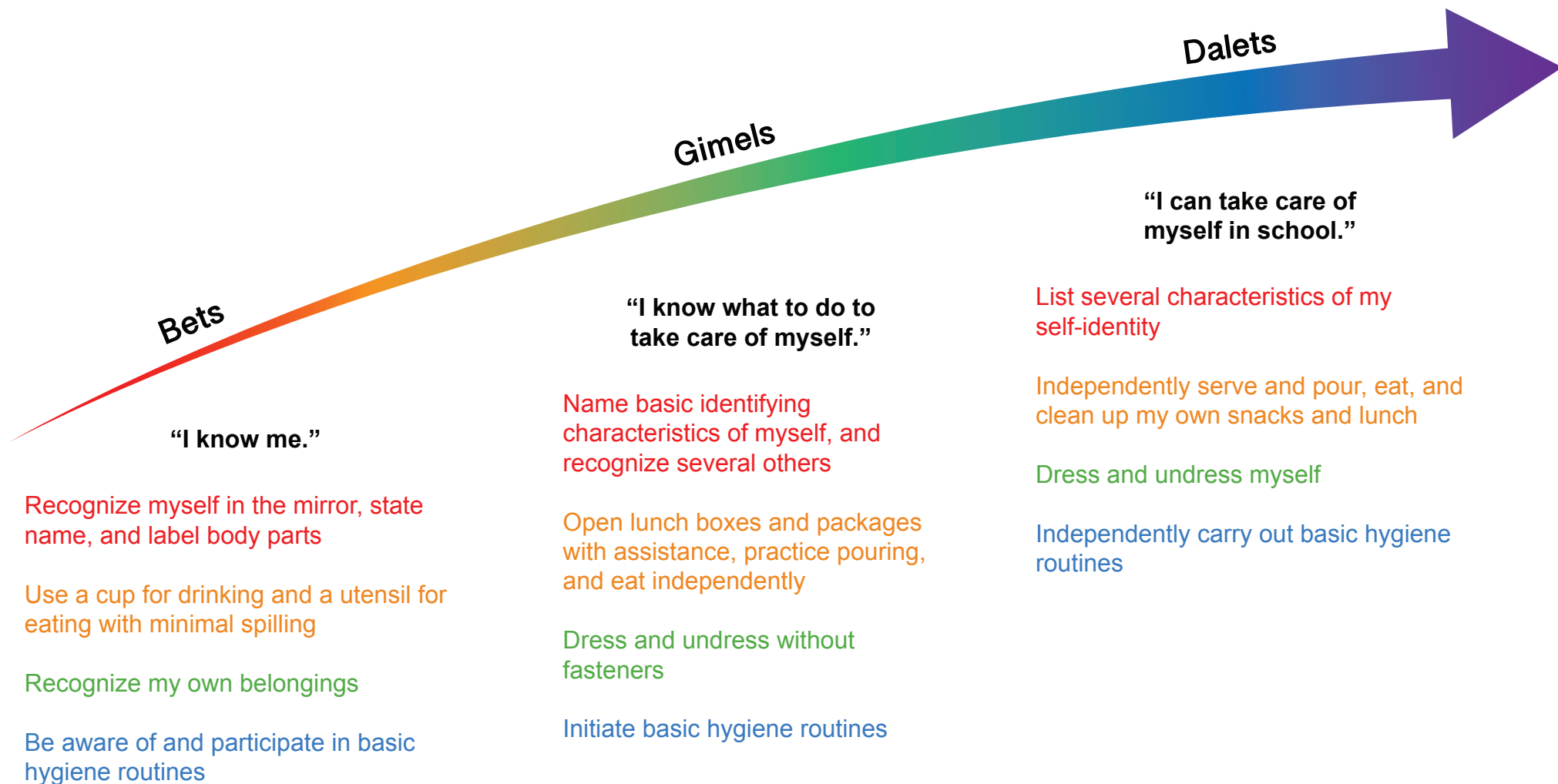
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Identify and implement successful solutions to common interpersonal conflicts and physical challenges.



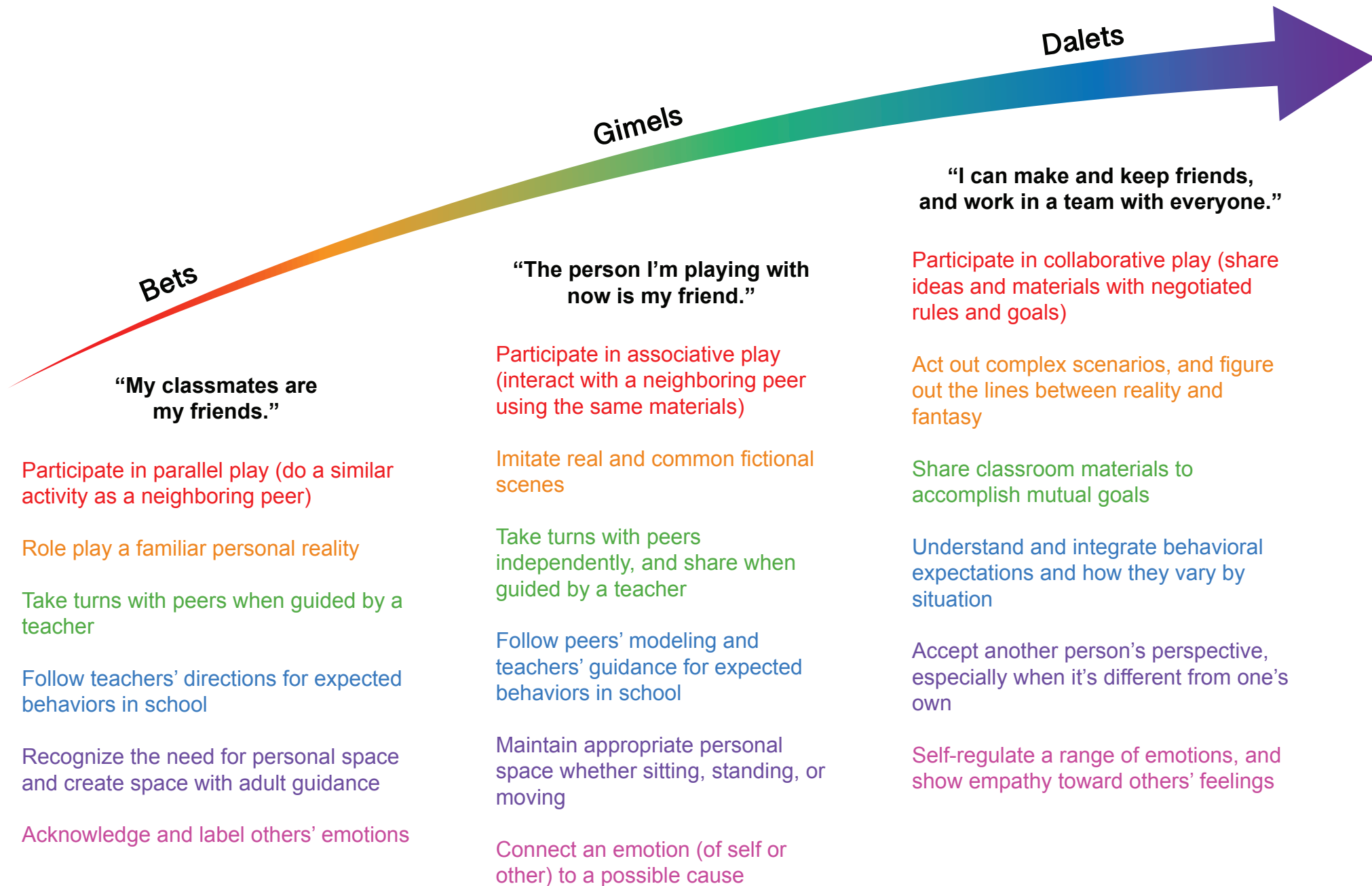
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Develop self-awareness and the ability to care for oneself regarding dressing, eating, cleaning, and toileting.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Make and keep friends, share classroom materials, show empathy and work as a team.





The Story Behind the Framework

Gan Ami teachers are the best! Their knowledge of child development, understanding of the educational process, and openness to new ideas is exceptional. Their love of young children and passion for creating community exceeds everyone's dreams. And as we say at Gan Ami, "No one ever leaves!" We have incredibly dedicated educators who know what they're doing and how to do it. We give children what they need, and children leave Gan Ami prepared for the next steps in education and in life.

But none of this was ever put in writing. For many reasons, including new and increasing demands on young children and families, the time had clearly come to articulate our goals for Gan Ami students. We needed to express our priorities and be held accountable for our teaching. Creating such a written document would have to be a team effort and it would take a lot of time. We would pull from years of engrained experience, combine it with the most recent research on early education, and commit it to paper.

Five staff members accepted the challenge and worked diligently for six months to make this happen. The first step was to decide on a structure, then tackle each area of development, identifying the skills that children work to build as they progress through their years at Gan Ami. Then, we revisited, edited, and reflected on our ideas. We asked other staff members and parents for input and made revisions based on their feedback. We didn't stop until we were sure that we had covered all key aspects of early childhood Jewish education at Gan Ami and we had expressed our goals clearly in words and conveyed our pedagogical beliefs effectively in images.

We presented this final work to the full Gan Ami staff in June 2018, to Gan Ami parents in Summer 2018, and to the Temple Board of Directors in Fall 2018.

Thank you for your attention to Gan Ami Framework for Early Education.

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