

# DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

---

This information can be used by consultants and/or student support team members to consider developmental expectations and progress. Additionally, special education teachers, related services providers, parents, and school psychologists can use this information as a guide when creating developmentally appropriate IEP goals.

---



# DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

## ADAPTIVE

## COGNITIVE

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

### AGE 3-4 YEARS

- Opens door by turning handle
- Puts on/takes off coat with assistance
- Pours well from small pitcher
- Spreads soft butter with knife
- Buttons/unbuttons large buttons
- Uses toilet and washes hands independently
- Helps with simple chores (e.g., feeding a pet, picking up toys, etc.)
- Recognizes/matches six colors
- Holds marker with fingers in tripod position

- Draws, names, and briefly explains somewhat recognizable picture
- Asks "why" and "how" questions
- Knows own age
- Has a short attention span for nonpreferred activities
- Learns through observing and imitating
- Knows what does not go together
- Understands what to do in specific situations

- Plays near/watches other children
- Begins to show more complex emotions, including jealousy, anger, guilt, pride, and silliness
- Shows an increase in fear
- May occasionally be aggressive with peers or argue with adults
- Begins to use symbolic "pretend" play and cooperative play
- Knows gender identity
- Shares/takes turns with assistance

### AGE 4-5 YEARS

- Cuts easy food with knife
- Laces shoes
- Makes bed and clears place at table
- Fixes bowl of cereal
- Knows value of coins
- Points to/names four to six colors
- Rote counts to 5
- Recognizes frequently occurring words in environment
- Labels most uppercase letters
- Frequently reverses letters when writing

- Plays with words (rhyming, making up words, etc.)
- Draws a person with recognizable parts
- Gives detailed descriptions of past events
- Attends for long periods to difficult tasks
- Uses "rules" to understand
- Makes inferences about the motivations of others
- Recites verses, short passages, and songs
- Attends to long stories when read, especially with pictures

- Plays/interacts with other children
- Wants to please others
- Pretend play includes details that mimic reality, including inner feelings
- Judges own characteristics
- Begins to compare self with others
- Uses self-talk and discussion to help calm
- Can modify actions in different situations
- Tattles on others

## Adapted from:

LDA of America. (n.d.). Early identification - social skills milestones. Retrieved June 20, 2022, from <https://www.ldonline.org/ld-topics/working-families/early-identification-social-skills-milestones>

Dawson, P., & Guare, R. (2009). *Smart but scattered: The revolutionary "executive skills" approach to helping kids reach their potential* (Illustrated ed.). The Guilford Press.

Morin, A., & Algermissen, M. (2020, June 2). Developmental milestones for high-schoolers. Understood. Retrieved June 25, 2020, from <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-thinking-differences/signs-symptoms/developmental-milestones/developmental-milestones-for-typical-high-schoolers>.

National Research Council (US) Panel to Review the Status of Basic Research on School-Age Children, & Collins, W.A (Eds.). (1984). *Development During Middle Childhood: The Years From Six to Twelve*. National Academies Press (US); DOI 10.17226/56.

Rycus, J.S., & Hughes, R.C. (1998). *Field guide to child welfare, volumes I-IV*. Child Welfare League of America.

## ADAPTIVE

## COGNITIVE

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

### AGE 5-6 YEARS

- Dresses and brushes teeth independently
- Ties a bow
- Crosses street safely
- Retells stories in sequence
- Names some letters/numbers
- Rote counts to 10
- Begins to relate clock time to daily schedule
- Begins adding and subtracting simple numbers

- Begins to accurately describe time (e.g., yesterday, tomorrow)
- Attention span improves
- Learns through instruction (vs. imitation)
- Knows right from left
- Makes a plan to solve a problem, monitors progress, and changes approach as needed
- Creates and acts out own stories

- Chooses own friends
- Plays simple table games
- Engages in cooperative play
- Believes rules can be changed
- Shows respect for others
- Understands and accepts punishment for doing wrong
- Becomes aware of feeling more than one emotion at a time
- Develops sense of own abilities compared to others

### AGE 6-8 YEARS

- Helps make and pack lunch
- Puts belongings away without help
- Brings papers to and from school
- Runs errands with two to three step instructions

- Improves in rational/logical thought process
- Recognizes how behavior affects others
- Remembers events from months or years earlier
- Completes up to 20 minutes of homework

- Recognizes others' perspectives, but struggles to assume their role
- Adheres strictly to rules
- Understands concepts of "right" and "wrong"

### AGE 8-10 YEARS

- Runs errands with time delay (i.e., doing something after school, etc.)
- Cleans bedroom/playroom (vacuuming, sweeping, dusting, etc.)
- Performs chores that take 15-30 minutes
- Keeps track of belongings when away from home
- Keeps track of daily schedule

- Completes homework (1 hour max)
- Plans a simple school project
- Plans how to earn, save, and spend money

- Can recognize the difference between behavior and intent
- Monitors and regulates own behavior while teacher is out of the room
- Refrains from making rude comments, etc.

## ADAPTIVE

## COGNITIVE

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

### AGE 10-12 YEARS

- Helps with chores around the home (60-90 minutes)
- Babysits younger siblings/children

- Uses an organizational system for homework
- Follows changing school schedule
- Plans and completes long-term projects
- Plans how to use time

- May be concerned about body image
- Acceptance by peers impacts self-esteem

### AGE 14-18 YEARS

- Earns money at a part-time job
- Has basic cooking skills
- Is able to perform all self-care tasks independently
- Tries to improve work performance following constructive criticism
- Can write with complexity about many different content areas
- Uses strategies to look for and compare information from multiple sources

- Begins to set own goals for the future while taking other opinions into account
- Decisions may seem rash
- Can think about and come up with ways to approach a hypothetical situation
- Begins to question authority, society's standards, and has increased thoughts on global concepts

- Can recognize personal strengths and challenges
- Strives to be independent
- Analyzes their own feelings and searches for a cause
- Spends a lot of time with friends
- Can voice emotions and tries to arrive at a solution
- Understands subtle social cues
- Excited and overwhelmed about the future