


Development Milestones – Cognitive Development

A child grows at their own pace and may be up to 3 months behind or ahead in many areas of development. Healthy growth and development will vary depending on the individual child and their abilities.



Age	Typically Will	Emerging Skills
At the end of 3 months, infants may be able to...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensorimotor Stage • Coordinate suck, swallow, breath sequence, (tongue is cupped, forward rhythmical movements of the tongue, and jaw consistently moves up and down in a coordinated pattern) • Communicate with smiles, gazes, and crying • Smile back when smiled at • Gurgles, coo, and squeal • Start to laugh 	
At the end of 4 months, infants may be able to...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch faces closely • Follow moving objects • Recognize objects and people they know • When hungry, will open mouth when seeing a breast or bottle • Respond to and mimic sounds and voices 	
At the end of 6 months, infants may be able to...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe hands closely • Reach for an object • Close lips and turns head away when full • Mouth objects to learn about them • Imitate gestures • Experiment with different volumes and pitches of sounds to communicate and/or express emotion • Notice the size of objects, reaching for smaller objects with her finger and thumb and larger objects with both hands. • Recognize and reach for familiar faces 	

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At the end of 11 months, infants may be able to...	Sensorimotor Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use tongue to move food around mouth Self-feed small crackers or other small pieces of food Search for objects when dropped out of sight Bang two items together Track a moving object, and finds one that is partially hidden Explore with hands and mouth Struggle to get objects that are out of reach Look from one object to another Watch a falling object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect animals with actions and sounds, such as meows, barks, or chirps Develop stronger memory skills Become aware of family members as separate people from themselves. Baby may point when asked, "Who's Mommy? Who's Daddy?" Match shapes (e.g., baby may place a cube in a matching square hole) Enjoy music sounds and songs Clap hands Wave goodbye
At 12 to 14 months, older infants may be able to...	Sensorimotor Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know where familiar items are kept Remove own shoes and socks Cooperate with dressing by extending an arm or leg Explore objects in different ways (shaking, banging, throwing, dropping) Know the names of familiar objects Respond to music Begin to explore cause and effect Place items into a container Look to find objects that have been moved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to use things the right way, like a phone, cup, or book Stack at least two small objects, like blocks Copy and learn from others Group similar things, such as socks, shoes, or blocks Use imaginative play (e.g., moving toy trucks around) Realize things still exist even when he cannot see them- object permanence Follow simple directions, such as "Come and show me the ball."
At 18 months, toddlers may be able to... 	Sensorimotor Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use objects as tools Fit related objects together (e.g., in a shape sorter) Copy you doing chores, like sweeping with a broom Play with toys in a simple way, like pushing a toy car Realize things exist when they are out of sight Point to body parts or toys Begin to pretend play Initiate activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the passage of time and the meaning of phrases like "not now" or "when we go home" Recognize and name familiar people in photos Show increased memory for details and routines Help you dress them by pushing an arm through a sleeve or lifting a foot Feed themselves with fingers Try to use a spoon Scribble Walk without holding on to anyone

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At 24 months/ 2 years old, older toddlers may be able to...	Moving into Pre-operational Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start to play “pretend,” such as by talking on a toy telephone Hold something in one hand while using the other hand (e.g., holding a container and taking the lid off) Recognize basic symbolism, such as nodding the head for yes or no Try to use switches, knobs, or buttons on a toy Play with more than one toy at the same time, like putting toy food on a toy plate Name parts of the body when shown and modelled Self-feed simple meals using a fork or spoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take socks and shoes off Enjoy/tolerate messy play Sit to look at a book independently Explore the concept of counting. Understand the idea of “more than one” Show great interest in investigating any new person, thing, or sounds Follow simple requests, such as “Put the book on the table” Notice when others are hurt or upset Say at least two words together Use gestures like waving
At 3 years, most preschoolers may be able to...	Pre-operational Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in pretend play with others Use things to pretend Show simple problem-solving skills, like standing on a small stool to reach something Follow two-step instructions like “Put the toy down and close the door” Show they know at least one colour, like pointing to a red crayon when you ask, “Which one is red?” Draw a circle when you show them how Match an object in their hand or the room to a picture in a book Include animals, dolls and people in make-believe play Sort easily by shape and colour Complete a puzzle with 3 or 4 pieces Understand the difference between 1 and 2 Name body parts and colours Understand common dangers of hot objects, stairs, glass Express emotions Ask “Why?” Use longer sentences for more detailed stories Talk about the past and future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolerate a range of different textured foods Engage in imaginative play Distinguish between urination and bowel movements Begin toilet learning Enjoy/tolerate messy play Know where familiar items are kept Attempt to brush teeth Understand opposites like big/small and more/less and concepts like “on”, “in” and “under” Know their own name, and age Memorize a string of numbers rather than actually count. The same is true of the alphabet. A child may say the letters from memory but may not be able to recognize a written letter singled out from the others



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At 4 years, most preschoolers may be able to...	Pre-operational Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think out a plan before making something Dress and undress self (only requiring assistance with laces, buttons, and other fasteners in awkward places) Play with 2 or 3 children in a group Brush teeth independently Take turns Complete morning routine at school (put bag away, hang up jacket, put drink bottle in correct spot) Self-feed without difficulty Express emotions Understand counting Follow a 3-part instruction Understand “same” and “different” Enjoy fantasy play Know their address Name a few colours Tell what comes next in a well-known story Draw a person with three or more body parts Understand complete sentences. Make predictions about what will happen next in a story or book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that events are connected, although their interpretation may not always be logical (e.g., a child may understand the logic that glass may break if hit with a rock. But he or she may still throw the rock thinking that it won’t break this time) Describe something that has happened to them Tell stories and can remember and recite nursery rhymes Identify letters and numbers when you name them Understand the concept of counting and can count up to four objects and sort them by colour and shape Better understand what time is Talk about one thing that has happened in their day Repeat words from a song Understand and responds to simple questions



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At 5 years old, most pre-kindergarten/ kindergarten children can...	Pre-operational Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Count to 10 Name some numbers between 1 and 5 when you point to them Use words about time, like “yesterday,” “tomorrow,” “morning,” or “night” Pay attention for 5 to 10 minutes during activities (e.g., during story time or making arts and crafts (screen time does not count)) Write some letters in her name Name some letters when you point to them Settle independently for sleep Pack a bag for school or other Ask a lot of questions, and answer simple questions Recognize rhymes, like “hop” and “stop” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know the names of at least 4 colours Know their address and phone number Know what household objects are used for, such as money, food, or appliances. Understand calendars and clocks Put things into categories Know days of the week, months, seasons Display an increased attention span Tell stories with a beginning, middle and end Carry out a 3-step sequence such as, ‘Get your shoes, put on your jacket, and pack your backpack’



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By 6 years old, most children may be able to...	Pre-operational Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open lunch boxes, zip lock bags, food packaging Independently put themselves to sleep and sleep through the night Eat a range of food and tolerate different textures Shower independently Pack a bag for school or other outings with little assistance/prompting Express emotions and begin problem solving independently Recount a favorite story or the plot of a favorite TV show Complete morning routine at school (put bag away, put jacket away, put drink bottle in correct spot) Play independently with 4 or 5 children in a group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand cause and effect. They begin to see how their actions affect other people, although sometimes they still seem focused on themselves Group objects according to size, shape and colour Have a good understanding of numbers and do simple math problems like adding and subtracting Understand the difference between imagination and reality Understand the concept of “10” and can count out 10 items Understand the difference between the past and the present Understand that things that are similar can be grouped together Understand basic math concepts of ‘more’ or ‘less’
By 7 years old most children may be able to...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know where their body is in time and space to coordinate body movements for ball skills Inhibit the need to talk/ask questions Prepare simple meals (e.g., cereal) Recall events and describing them Remember a sentence to write that was just thought about or told Take on more responsibilities e.g., chores Dress themselves Catch a ball more easily Develop friendships and consider them important Learn how to properly cooperate Have a very solid understanding of time Demonstrate a longer attention span 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete Operational Stage Answer both factual and abstract questions more thoroughly Begin to comprehend that words can have multiple meanings Start to prefer a learning style (e.g., some children like hands-on activities, such as a science experiment with colour. Others like to work quietly on their own, such as practicing printing) Solve simple math problems using objects (such as counting beads) Consider issues and problems using only one factor at a time



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By 8 to 12 years old, most children may be able to...	Concrete Operational Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize and plan Tell the time and display time management skills Have a solid sense of time. They understand seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, seasons, and sometimes years Have better reading than spelling skills Begin to understand the value of money and enjoy counting and saving Tell the difference between fantasy and reality Enjoy collecting items like hockey cards, shells, or small figurines Understand relationships among objects Understand a variety of concepts Think logically Have a sense of identity: strong desire to belong to a group and establish their place within the social order of their school Recognize that different people have different perspectives and may see a situation differently Work cooperatively toward shared goals Verbalize feelings and emotions clearly to others Pursue their interests with diligence and focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell jokes and talk up their skills or behaviour Use technology and have screen time Share strong opinions about whether things are right or wrong Follow a simple recipe Engage in more complex conversations Develop a variety of academic skills Show increased abstract thinking skills- understand symbols, and what lengths of time represent Put themselves in others' shoes, their sense of justice begins to arise Understand multiplication and division of multiple digits and start learning about fractions and geometry Learn how to make graphs and charts using data and work on word problems that require analytical and logical thinking Visualize objects in space and draw conclusions about where an object will be or what it will look like from a different perspective



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