

PRESCHOOL MILESTONES

This guide is designed to give parents and caregivers an overview of developmental milestones. Because children develop at their own pace, it's impossible to tell exactly when a child will learn a given skill. If you have questions about your child's development, please contact your local school district."



Children are learning to do more things for themselves, helping them feel independent. They love to explore words, language, and enjoy making up stories. Three-year-olds very actively explore the world about them and are eager to please their parents. It's an ideal time to establish lifelong habits.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

- Cooperates with adult requests most of the time
- Waits 3-5 minutes to get needs met
- Plays with 1-3 children, sharing materials
- Separates easily from parents

COGNITION AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

- Sorts objects by color and shape
- Points to basic body parts
- Matches an object to a picture in a book
- Begins to understand the concepts of 1, 2, and 3

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

- Follows a 1-or 2-step direction(s)
- Recognizes and identifies common objects
- Uses sentence length of 3-4 words, with errors
- Speech is understood most of the time

MOVEMENT

- Jumps with 2 feet
- Begins to throw, catch, and kick a ball
- Runs without falling
- Begins to pedal a tricycle

HAND AND FINGER SKILLS

- Turns book pages one at a time
- Begins to use a variety of writing tools and draws
- Dresses and undresses self with some assistance
- Uses spoon, fork, cup, and begins to serve self



During this year your child will improve skills and develop new ones. Providing plenty of time for physical activity, especially outdoors, is a good way to prevent children from getting bored and acting out. Let children dress up and pretend to be a firefighter, a teacher, etc. It's through play that children learn best.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

- Able to resolve minor conflicts
- Willingly tries new experiences
- Participates in dramatic play with 3-4 children
- Carries out routine activities with some help

COGNITION AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

- Correctly names primary colors
- Understands "same" and "different"
- Recalls parts of a story
- Understands counting and some numbers

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

- Follows a 3-step direction
- Tells stories or experiences with a sequence
- Uses sentence length of 4-6 words
- Speech is generally understood

MOVEMENT

- Catches a ball
- Kicks and throws a ball with control
- Hops and stands on 1 foot up to 5 seconds
- Goes up and down stairs without support

HAND AND FINGER SKILLS

- Draws circles and squares
- Begins to copy some letters in name
- Begins to use scissors
- Dresses self without supervision



The world of a five-year-old is cheerful, energetic, and enthusiastic. Children enjoy planning and spend a great deal of time discussing who will do what. They enjoy dramatic play and are able to share toys and materials with other children. Five-year-olds are more sensitive to the needs and feelings of others around them.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

- Plans and negotiates situations with 3-5 children
- Likes to sing, dance, and act
- Participates in games with peers
- Works cooperatively toward a common goal

COGNITION AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

- Names colors and shapes
- Names body parts
- Counts 10 or more objects
- Recognizes some letters of the alphabet

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

- Can converse using complete sentences
- Expresses ideas and feelings
- Uses sentence length of more than 6 words
- Answers questions how, when, and why

MOVEMENT

- Throws, kicks, and catches a ball with accuracy
- Swings and climbs on playground equipment
- Stands and hops easily on 1 foot
- Walks down stairs carrying an object

HAND AND FINGER SKILLS

- Draws a person with body
- Prints some letters independently
- Cuts simple shapes
- Completes self-care skills independently