**Childhood developmental milestones**

Kirby, A. (2012) 'Childhood developmental milestones'. Newport: Dyscovery Centre, University of Wales.

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| **Age**  **Years** | **Language & Reading Development** | **Physical & Motor Development** | **Social & Emotional Development** | **Cognitive Development** | **Red flags** |
| **4** | * Uses correct grammar most of the time. * Can recognise rhymes * Can sit and listen to a story for 5 minutes * Infantile substitutions in speech * Understands number/space concepts- e.g. on/over/under | Gross motor   * Dressing self unaided (except tying shoelaces) * Uses whole body to kick ball forcibly * Catches large ball between extended arms * Jumps vertically with both feet leaving the floor * Goes down stairs one foot per step   Fine motor   * Can copy and draw a cross, horizontal and vertical line * Can button and unbutton own clothing * Can thread beads * Can cut paper with scissors | * Can play with other children and taking turns * Observing others in play | * Asks lots of questions * Gives first and last name * Can repeat three digits correctly – three times e.g. six-eight-nine * Counts up to 20 * Can watch a TV programme or DVD for 10 minutes | * No pointing * Little or no speech * Hard for others to understand speech * Difficulty running/climbing * Dribbling * Difficulty with nursery rhymes |
| **5** | * Engages appropriately in conversations * Use “would” or “could” appropriately * Able to identify and name all uppercase and lowercase letters * Use sentences containing at least 7 or 8 words * Use past tense more consistently * Describes objects. * Speech fluent with few infantile substitutions | Gross motor   * Riding a bicycle with training wheels * Can walk along a narrow line heel to toe * Climbs play equipment * Able to jump to a height of about 30cm * Can go up and down stairs alternating feet * Show improvements in running and jumping * Can catch a large ball with their hands * Can attend to toilet needs without much help   Fine motor   * Cutting across a page with scissors * Copies their own name * Colour within the lines * Can hold a pen or pencil in tripod or equivalent grip * Can cut and stick * Can copy basic 2D shapes (e.g. square, triangle, diamond) * Can use a knife to spread jam/butter etc * Brushes teeth( but may need reminding) | * Choosing friends and co-operating in play * Prefer playing in small groups * Protect younger children * Show respect for other people’s property * Play well without the need for constant adult supervision * Understand the nature of giving and receiving * Can turn take * Separates from mother easily. * Gives appropriate eye contact- e.g. when being spoken to * Sitting at the table for ten minutes | * Uses imagination to create stories * Can match colours * Can listen to a story for ten minutes * Can name the 7 days in a week * Has a vocabulary of over 2000 words. * Can recognise numerals at least 1-5 * When asked is able to say their own name and address. | * Deterioration in motor function e.g. walking, running * Not turn taking, playing with other children * Not counting up to 10 * Not able to do rhyming songs * Limited vocabulary * Can’t sit still compared with other children of similar age. * Aggressive behaviour |
| **6** | * Talks fluently * Can understand more complex grammatical rules * Can read and write to some degree * Can learn how to do things through the use of language * Can use language to work through scenarios and problems | Gross motor   * Able to control speed when running and avoid collision * Can jump down several steps * Can kick a football up to 6m away * Can throw a ball with accuracy * Able to stand and balance on one foot for at least 3 seconds. * Walk heel-to-toe in a straight line * Dress and undress without help * Brushes own hair well * Ride a bike without stabilisers * Catch and bounce a small ball 4-6 times   Fine motor   * Tying shoelaces * Using a knife and fork correctly * Drawing a diamond * Can draw a person * cuts out shapes well using scissors * Can open and close a zip * Writes their first and last name | * Expresses awareness of others feelings * Enjoys imaginative play with other children * Can be selfish or overly competitive * May still have tantrum behaviours * Get upset when criticised by others | * Are inquisitive * Have the ability to see other’s perspectives * More emphasis on quantity rather than quality of work * Enjoy starting tasks but these are not always completed * Can distinguish reality from something that is made up * Can give reasons * Can follow directions * Can do addition and subtraction of single digits | * Can’t copy shapes * Spelling errors for one syllable words * Difficulty turn taking * Speech not fluent |
| **7** | * Can describe points of similarity between two objects * Should understand opposite analogies easily (e.g. black-white, big-small, beginning-end) * Should be able to read aloud to some extent * Able to use an increasing number of words and understand more concepts | Gross motor   * Is able to ride a bicycle without training wheels * Can walk along a thin line * Can do a somersault or forward roll * Is able to catch skilfully using one hand * Is able to throw skilfully using one hand * Able to plan movements * Has an awareness of direction and distance * Shows improvements in hand-eye coordination   Fine motor   * Is able to cut using a knife * Is able to draw a diagonal line | * Can wait their turn during an activity * Desires to be perfect and is self-critical * Starts to look for independence * Moods can fluctuate * Have more of an awareness of their own emotions. * Worries about not being liked by others * Tends to complain more often * Shows strong emotional reactions * Worries more - may have low self-confidence * Is a better loser and is less likely to place blame | * Is able to understand the rules of a game * Has a reasonable attention span (20 minutes) * Uses serious logical thinking - can be thoughtful and reflective * Can tell the time (including quarter of an hour) with ease * Knows the days, months and seasons. * Able to solve more complex problems * Is able to understand the difference between right and wrong * Can understand at least 3 separate instructions within a command * Can remember which hand is left and which is right * Knows of and can explain the uses of a number of objects * Has a short term memory repetition of at least 3 numbers | * Not reading aloud to others with fluency. * Not able to do syllable breakdown * Obsessional behaviour * Limited interaction with other children * Difficulty with motor tasks- gross or fine motor- not catching/ throwing accurately/ not copying shapes accurately |
| **8** | * Can converse at an almost adult level * Can read with confidence and fluency * Reading may be a major interest * Can use complex sentences with ease * Has established all sounds used in speech * Have control over aspects of reading aloud such as rate, pitch and volume * Can follow more complex commands | Gross motor   * Can bathe themselves * Can pour a drink without spilling * Need to be physically active every day (approx. 30 mins)   Fine motor   * Use a ruler | * Emotions change quickly * Impatient - finds waiting for special events torturous * Makes friends easily; develops close friends of same sex * Favours group play, clubs and team sports - wants to feel part of a group * More influenced by peer pressure * Has a strong need for love and understanding - especially from mother * Can be helpful, cheerful and pleasant as well as rude, bossy, and selfish * May be quite sensitive and overly dramatic * Can be obsessed with and motivated by money * Can keep secrets * Can articulate their feelings * Usually enjoy school – don’t enjoy being absent from school * Is possessive of their belongings | * Can sit and concentrate for 15-20 minutes * Seeks to understand the reasons for things * Begins to feel competent in skills and have preferences for some activities and subjects * Thinking is organised and logical * Begins to recognise concept of reversibility (4 + 2 = 6 and 6 – 2 = 4) * Can do some simple division and multiplication | * Difficulties using scissor /rulers |
| **9** | * likes to talk and share ideas | Gross motor   * Can help make a snack or drink for him or herself   Fine motor   * Can use a computer keyboard | * Has a best friend * May experience wide mood swings * May be critical of self and others * often dislikes the opposite sex intensely * Puts great importance on fairness - for self and others * Responsible - can be depended upon and trusted | * Writes stories * May use physical complaints to avoid unpleasant tasks | * Finds writing difficult |
| **10** | * Reads to learn (rather than learning to read) | Gross motor   * Interested in own strength - boys enjoy wrestling * Has both skill and stamina for gross motor activities such as biking, skating, and team sports   Fine motor   * Can use a can opener * Capable of fine hand and finger movements * Draws with great detail * Uses tools, such as a hammer or small garden tools, fairly well | * Still certain that own beliefs are correct and are universally shared. * Disposition is generally happy, sometimes silly * Respectful and affectionate toward both parents * Fears which were previously bothersome are now minimal * May anger quickly but expression of anger * differs according to the situation * Friendships are quite important - friends are of the same sex * Enjoys socialising in clubs and group activities | * Can buy something in a shop and handle money * Has a strong desire to complete tasks may persist with an activity until exhausted * Memorises and recites facts - but may not show deep understanding * Keeps train of thought and will continue work even after interruptions * Able to use a dictionary * Critical thinking starting to emerge * Developing a conscience but not yet consistently able to tell right from wrong * Aware of time but needs help to plan time in a practical way * Can do percentages | * Writing not fluent, and easy for others to read * Frequent spelling errors   Difficulty remaining in seat in class   * Aggression to others in unstructured settings * Few friends |
| **11** | Good keyboard skills on computer | * Can make a snack | * Self care- wash brush teeth * Help lay and clear the table * Starts to realise that others may hold beliefs different from own * Displays anger physically-fights, slams doors, kicks * Away from home, behaviour is well mannered and quite helpful * Friendships are still important but with more quarrels than before * May have one “best friend” | * Can write a story competently beginning to be aware of right and wrong (versus good and bad) * Can sits at the table for 30 minutes * Can work independently doing homework * Able to use logic in arguments and apply logic to specific, concrete situations * Combines oral, visual, and written material in school reports * Shows improvements in ability to make decisions- * Can do simple word maths problems * Can understand concept of fractions- whole/half/quarter * Can start to combine two shapes to make a new shape |  |