

Social & Emotional

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

0-3 MONTHS

- Likes to be held close and cuddled
- Turns head toward familiar voice
- Enjoys looking at faces
- Begins to smile and coo at people
- Enjoys playing with people and might cry when playing stops
- Cries when hungry, uncomfortable, tired, or unhappy
- Can briefly calm self by sucking on hand or pacifier
- Is comforted by voice, sight, smell, and touch of familiar caregiver

3-6 MONTHS

- Observes people and activities
- Responds with eye gaze, smiling, and cooing when spoken to, picked up, or shown affection by a familiar caregiver
- Initiates social interactions with others by making eye contact and cooing
- Copies some facial expressions, like smiling or frowning
- Laughs aloud, squeals, blows bubbles
- Shows excitement by waving arms and legs
- Communicates distress verbally (fusses, cries) and nonverbally (turns head, frowns, arches back, spits up)
- Stops crying when a familiar caregiver comes near
- Responds to other people's emotions

6-9 MONTHS

- Looks back and forth between toy and adult while playing
- Reaches out to touch another person
- Responds differently to caregiver and strangers, may become clingy with familiar adults
- Turns and looks when name is called
- Recognizes self in mirror
- Expresses distinct emotions, such as fear, sadness, anger, excitement
- Seeks reassurance from caregivers, for example starts to crawl and often "checks back" with caregiver

9-12 MONTHS

- Repeats sounds and actions that get attention or laughter
- Shows affection to others, such as hugs, pats, and kisses
- Uses several gestures like showing, pointing, and waving bye-bye
- Plays simple interaction games, such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake
- Looks to familiar adults for comfort
- Is shy or nervous with strangers and may cry when separated from primary caregiver ("stranger anxiety")
- Understands "no"
- Begins to show a sense of humor, for example laughing at funny faces

12-18
MONTHS

- Shows or points to object and looks at caregiver to make sure the caregiver sees it too
- Brings toy to share with caregiver
- Enjoys praise and clapping to celebrate accomplishments
- Moves toward or away from people or objects to express comfort/discomfort
- Looks to caregiver for reassurance when faced with a new situation
- Often attached to favorite toy or blanket

18-24
MONTHS

- Plays near or next to other children (“parallel play”)
- Copies others, especially adults and older children
- Shows signs of empathy and caring for others (e.g., comforting another child who is hurt or giving bottle to a crying baby)
- Begins to assert independence (“No!”, “Mine!”) and own preferences, wants to try doing things without help
- May have temper tantrums and use physical aggression when frustrated

24-36
MONTHS

- Says “please” and “thank you” when reminded
- Shows interest in other children and enjoys being around them, even if not playing together yet
- May show preference for certain children, show affection for friends
- Participates in simple group activity or group game like chase
- Begins to take turns with assistance
- Recognizes some emotions in self and others; begins to name feelings
- Takes pride in own accomplishments by smiling, clapping, cheering for self, or saying “I did it!”
- May have increased temper tantrums, physical aggression, or rapid mood shifts

36-48
MONTHS

- Can follow familiar daily routines at home and school
- Begins to notice differences and similarities in people (e.g., skin color, hair color, abilities)
- Can name a friend
- Initiates or joins in cooperative play with other children
- Joins in group games with simple rules
- Begins to negotiate solutions to conflicts or might accept compromise offered by an adult
- Shares toys and takes turns, with assistance
- Expresses a wider range of emotions (e.g., embarrassed, bored, brave, grateful)
- Develops specific fears (e.g., monsters, the dark, certain animals, costumed characters)
- Begins to develop patience (is able to briefly wait without becoming upset) with assistance
- Expresses emotions through words in addition to actions and body language
- Begins to manage emotions by asking for help or using conscious self-soothing strategies (e.g., deep breaths to calm down, self-talk) with assistance