



Social & Emotional

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES CHECKLISTS

0-3
MONTHS

- Likes to be held close and cuddled
- Enjoys looking at faces
- Begins to smile at people
- Can briefly calm self by sucking on hand or pacifier
- Is comforted by voice, sight, smell, and touch of familiar caregiver

3-6
MONTHS

- Responds with eye gaze or smiling when spoken to, picked up, or shown affection by a familiar caregiver
- Initiates social interactions with others by making eye contact and/or cooing
- Copies some facial expressions, like smiling or frowning
- Shows excitement by waving arms and legs
- Laughs or chuckles

6-9
MONTHS

- Looks back and forth between toy and adult while playing
- Shows interest in simple interaction games (e.g., peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake)
- Reaches out to touch another person
- Responds differently to caregiver than to strangers; may become clingy with familiar adults
- Turns and looks when name is called
- Expresses distinct emotions (e.g., fear, sadness, anger, excitement)

9-12
MONTHS

- Participates in simple interaction games (e.g., peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake)
- Uses several communicative gestures (e.g., showing, pointing, giving, or waving bye-bye)
- Looks to familiar adults for comfort
- May be shy or nervous with strangers and may cry when separated from primary caregiver (“stranger anxiety”)
- Responds to “no” by stopping momentarily or protesting
- Begins to show a sense of humor (e.g., laughing at funny faces)

12-18
MONTHS

- Initiates joint attention (e.g., points to car 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
- Shows affection to others (e.g., hugs, pats, kisses)
- May use a favorite toy or blanket to self-soothe

18-24
MONTHS

- Plays near or next to other children (“parallel play”)
- 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
- Enjoys being around other children; may show preference for certain friends
- Participates in simple group activity or game, like chase
- Begins to take turns with assistance
- Recognizes and/or names some feelings in self and others
- 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 with adult assistance
- Can name a friend
- Initiates or tries to join in play with other children
- Shares toys and takes turns, with assistance
- Begins to negotiate solutions to conflicts or might accept compromise offered by an adult
- Is able to wait briefly without becoming upset, with assistance
- Expresses emotions through words in addition to actions and body language
- Begins to manage intensity of emotions by asking for help or using self-soothing strategies (e.g., deep breaths to calm down, hugging a comfort object) with assistance