



How Children Develop – 0-12 years Resource

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Background

Developmental profiles given for each age should be considered as those that will typically be reached by the upper level of the age range.

Warning signs have been included to provide an indication of when additional support or referral may be required. The warning signs are indicators only and need to be considered in context of the child and their family.

There are a number of factors which can affect whether children reach their milestones including, prematurity, chronic illness, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)¹, family and environmental stress³, congenital and or genetic abnormalities.

The document aims to assist community health nurses (CHNS) assess a normally developing child and initiate additional support or referral as required.

General principles

Assessing parents and caregivers at key developmental stage enables the CHN to:

- Continue to establish a helping relationship with the family.
- Complete a physical and developmental assessment, and provide information about child development.
- Identify those children at risk and who may require extra services or supports.

Assessments can be delivered as an individual face to face contact, or at the child health centre/school or as a home visit.

Birth to 14 days developmental milestones

Birth to 10 days developmental milestones	An infant should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:	
	Social/Emotional		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> spontaneous or imitative facial gestures: stick out tongue, tongue extension over gum line and lips with wide oral gape, pouting of mouth begins to calm in recognition of their mother's voice establishes interaction with their caregivers through eye contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feeding difficulties parental concerns frequently irritable or inconsolable when upset 	
	Gross Motor		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> marked head lag when pulled to sitting back curved, and head flops forward when held in supported sitting position head turns sideways, knees tucked under abdomen and buttocks humped up when lying prone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> head preference, plagiocephaly and/or brachycephaly increased or low muscle tone 	
	Reflexes		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflex standing and reflex walking if feet placed on hard surface moro, rooting, gag/cough, and palmar grasp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> absence or delayed reflexes 	
	Hearing and vision		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> turns towards diffuse light but closes eyes to sudden bright light shows preference in looking at faces and patterns shows interest in face and object at distance of 30 centimetres recognises mothers voice and of their native language startles to loud sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of eye contact/non responsive to sounds 	
	Senses		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begins to calm and relax in recognition of mother's smell sensitive to touch on mouth, face, hands, soles and abdomen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inconsolable crying, high pitched crying 		

6-8 weeks developmental milestones

6-8 weeks developmental milestones	An infant should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
	Social/Emotional	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sucks on fingers or thumb, or other sensory modalities to calm, i.e. self-regulation engages in eye gazing to briefly make and sustain eye contact with caregiver imitates adult facial expressions and emerging social smile prefers the human voice over any other noise (especially primary carers) vocalises, may coo/gurgle in response to caregivers voice prefers contact with people rather than objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoidance of eye contact during wakeful alert state frequently irritable or inconsolable when upset attachment concerns, parents having difficulty 'tuning' into their baby's needs unresponsive to caregiver or caregiver unresponsive to baby
	Personal/Social	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cries to get attention if hungry or upset efficient feeding indicated by coordination of <i>suck: swallow: breath</i> and no difficulty in swallowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feeding difficulties
	Cognition	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sustains brief alert periods showing interest in surroundings begins to understand some cause and effect; may calm when swaddled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoidance of eye contact during wakeful alert states
	Gross Motor	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> suckles the nipple/teat and touch parent's chest with hands turns toward familiar voices and sounds when supine holds head up while prone and may attempt to prop self-up on arms briefly brings both hands towards mouth lies in a stable and flexed position while lying on the left and right side turns head both ways when supine or prone kicks legs vigorously; movement of limbs is of equal strength and flexibility attempts to keep head in midline asymmetrical tonic neck reflex present, i.e. in supine position, head turns to one side, the ipsilateral arm and leg stretches out slightly, while contralateral arm and leg bends slightly Moro / rooting / gag /cough / and palmar grasp reflexes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feeding difficulties increased or low muscle tone not tolerating 'tummy time' asymmetry of movement or posture hip dysplasia/ laxity of hip joints head preference, plagiocephaly and/ or brachycephaly absence or delayed reflexes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stepping reflex present, i.e. bend and straighten legs in bouncing or stepping motion when suspended upright above a flat surface swimming reflex present, i.e. outstretch arms and legs when suspended horizontally on the stomach Babinski reflex present, i.e. toes fan out and curl and the foot twists in when the foot is stroked on the sole from the heel to the toe 	
Vision	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> watches face and make eye contact pupils react to light, and will turn head and eyes towards diffuse light source defensive blink fixates eye gaze and follow sounds and objects 15-30cm from face, arc of 30° from midline poor visual acuity (20/200 to 20/400 range) prefers black and white contrasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frequent unusual or asymmetrical eye movements lack of eye contact
Hearing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> startles to sudden noises turns towards sounds, if whimpering may calm if hears a soothing voice or prolonged sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> non-responsive to sounds
Fine Motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begins to take interest in hands and move eyes in unison most of the time palmer grasp reflex present, i.e. will grasp objects if placed in palm of hand and will not release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frequent unusual or asymmetrical eye movements clenched fists majority of time
Language and Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attends to human speech if only one person is speaking cries to get attention if hungry or upset and develops different cries for hunger, tiredness, discomfort, fear begins responsive vocalisations protrudes tongue and shapes mouth in 'pre-speech' movements coos softly when relaxed and happy visually track mother's voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not vocalising, including crying little or no reaction to loud sounds
Other	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any parental/carer concerns

3-4 months developmental milestones

3-4 months developmental milestones

An infant should be able to do some or all of the following:

Warning signs to watch for:

Social/Emotional

- begins to express emotions
- calms to soft reassuring voice and to being held
- entertains self by playing with hands
- frequently alert and available for responsive interaction with caregivers
- smiles and chuckles in response to a friendly face or voice
- begins to be wary of strangers
- gazes with contentment at carer's face
- shows pleasure and excitement to familiar routines

- no longer smiling or demanding attention
- frequent irritable or inconsolable when upset and excessive crying
- avoidance of eye contact during wakeful alert states
- difficulty in establishing sleep/feed routine
- unresponsive to caregiver or caregiver unresponsive to baby

Personal/Social

- explores environment visually
- opens mouth to the touch of a nipple or teat of a bottle
- enjoys familiar routines, e.g. bathing, singing, playing
- shows excitement and eager anticipation of feeding and feeds well

- feeding difficulties

Cognition

- hand regard looks at and touches objects
- explores environment by looking around
- looks at objects placed in hands
- follows moving object with eyes
- recognises familiar faces, voices and smells
- anticipates the climax of a familiar game i.e. clearly prepare themselves or become excited when it's time to be tickled

- little or no reaction to loud sounds
- none or few vocalisations
- does not watch faces when an interesting sound is made
- no evidence of hand regard

Gross Motor

- bring hands to midline and get fist to mouth
- holds head up and keep upright when sitting in upright position
- little or no head lag when pulled to sit

- increased or low muscle tone
- not taking weight on forearms in prone position
- unable to tolerate 'tummy time' and spending little or

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prefers to hold head midline, able to turn head from side to side when supine • kicks legs vigorously, with symmetrical movement • reaches for a toy dangled above when supine • corkscrew rotation developing, i.e. segmental rotation from supine to prone • when prone, lifts head and shoulders and upper chest in midline by using forearms as support, • back is straight except in lumbar region • begins to roll 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no time engaged in floor time play • atypical segmental rotation from supine to prone, i.e. body turns in the opposite direction of the head or a sideways–upwards pattern • increased or low muscle tone • asymmetry of movement or posture/tremors • constant moving of the head • frequent back arching which is not associated with over stimulation or feeding concerns • head preference, plagiocephaly and/ or brachycephaly
Fine motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grasps objects if placed in palm of hand, places objects in the mouth and likes to suck hands or toys, hand regard when laying supine, watches own hand movements and plays with fingers, hands open loosely • reaches out to grab or pat at object (from 4 months) • follows a dangling toy approximately 20-25 centimeters away from face, and fixes on object for brief time • reaches fingers towards caregiver’s face when near 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoids directly gazing at objects or people during wakeful alert states • frequent unusual or asymmetrical eye movements, e.g.strabismus and squint • asymmetrical movement of facial muscles including eye lids and mouth • none or limited hand regard
Vision and Hearing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very alert, is attracted to human face and follows their movements • quietens to familiar voice or sound • turns head or eyes towards sound • attracted to both black and white and coloured (yellow and red) contrasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none or few vocalisations, little or no reaction to loud noises • not fixing and following objects 20-25 centimetres from face
Language and Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babbles, e.g. repeating a simple vowel or consonant sound such as ‘p’, ‘b’, ‘m’ “pah”, “bah”, “mumum”, “oo”, “ahh” • vocalises in synchrony to language of caregiver • smiles when socially stimulated and will laugh, chuckle and squeal in pleasure • licks lips or sucks in response to feeding preparation • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none or few vocalisations • only vocalises to cry • oral hypersensitivity

	Other	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• parental/carer concerns• any regression of skills

6 months developmental milestones

6 months developmental milestones	An infant should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:	
	Social/Emotional		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows delighted response to rough-and-tumble play reacts enthusiastically to familiar games little more shy of strangers, especially if caregiver not in sight passes toys hand to hand and reaches for items of interest shows great interest in toys and will take everything to mouth follows person pointing towards an object or person and toys can be the shared focus of play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> over reactive to touch and environmental stimuli no established routine around eating, sleeping and playing frequent irritable behaviour, such as prolonged inconsolable periods of crying 	
	Personal/Social		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> puts hands on breast or bottle and grasps feeding cup learns how to suck food from a spoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feeding difficulties 	
	Gross Motor		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when lying prone, lifts head and chest well up, taking weight on extended arms with palms flat rolls from prone to supine around 5-6 months and rolls from supine to prone around 6-7 months from back, raises head up and moves arms to be lifted sits with support, head and back straight, turns head from side to side to look around weight bears and bounces up and down when supported with feet standing on firm surface when hands held, brace shoulders and pulls self to sitting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased or low muscle tone asymmetrical movements of limbs/ tremors no attempt at rolling 	
	Cognition		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> looks around at nearby objects shows curiosity about objects and tries to grab those that are out of reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> non-responsive to sounds/ visual stimulation/caregiver 	
	Fine Motor		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stretches out both hands together, then progressing with one arm to grasp small toys uses whole hand to palmar grasp and pass toy from hand to hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not reaching or grasping for objects 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reaches out for rattle, deliberately shakes to make a sound and very attentive to toy 	
Reflexes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> protective reflexes begin to appear downward parachute, i.e. infant extends and abducts both legs and feet are plantigrade (walking on the full sole of the foot), when held and rapidly lowered sideward protective: Infant puts arms out to save if tilted off balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> primitive reflexes still present
Vision and hearing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stares with interest within 15-30 centimetre range follows with interest, actions of others immediately turns towards familiar voice across a room listens to voice, even if adult not in view turns towards sound when at ear level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> non- responsive to sounds or visual stimulation
Language and communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tuneful babble, using single or double syllables, e.g. "a-a", "goo", "aroo", "muh" babbles and chuckles in response to happy interactions does show facial expression of frustration/ irritation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no or limited babble, non-responsive to sounds, familiar voice, or facial expressions non- responsive to caregiver no or limited chuckles, smiles

8 months developmental milestones

8 months developmental milestones	An infant should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
	Social/Emotional	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • laughs out loud and smile spontaneously • enjoys interactive games, e.g. Peek-a-Boo and imitates clapping • cries in response to another infant's cry • differentiates between familiar and unfamiliar people • begins to show preference to one or two adults • shows stranger anxiety but able to be quickly consoled by familiar adult • cries if caregiver leaves • reacts to emotional displays from others • gets upset at 'still' face of caregiver or if caregiver does not respond • makes eye contact with caregiver, however contact is quick and occurs many times during an interaction • entertains self by playing with feet and toes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoidance of eye contact during wakeful alert states • irritable behaviour, such as frequent and prolonged inconsolable periods of crying • virtually no demand for attention • high level of anxiety or fear when meeting strangers or experiencing change • no established routine around eating, sleeping and playing • dislikes being touched • very little response to caregiver or response by caregiver
	Personal/Social	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • places hands on breast or bottle during feeding • shows interest in finger foods, able to pick up "chunky" pieces • tries to grasp spoon when being fed • bites and chews small pieces of food • shouts for attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of interest in picking up food/ spoon • inability to grasp objects • feeding /texture transition difficulties
	Gross Motor	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • independent segmental rotation from supine to prone and back again • able to stand flat, weight bear, feet plantigrade when supported • trunk rotation evident in rolling and sitting (turns and reach for toys) able to turn, reach and play with toys while sitting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows lack of desire or ability to move • not able to sit up unsupported • atypical segmental rotation from supine to prone • not able to go from lying to sitting independently

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moves from lying to sitting independently • sits up straight unsupported for a brief time; able to adjust posture when leaning forward without losing balance • uses arms and hands to play while sitting • lifts head when lying on back • begins to commando crawl/creep and crawl • gets into crawling position by getting up on hands and knees • may pull themselves into a standing position using furniture • supports own weight through legs when hands held • bounces actively if held to stand • moves to look for a dropped object • moves to a sitting position from prone position • forward parachute reflex present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asymmetry of posture or movement • reluctance to put feet flat on ground or to weight bear in supported standing position or is only able to weight bear on toes and not on heels • not rolling from prone to supine or supine to prone • experiences tremors of hands and/or limbs • increased or low muscle tone
Cognition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishes object and person permanence and will search for missing person or object if they first observe the 'hiding' • imitates gestures • visually alert to new people, objects and surroundings • offers or shows toys and objects to interactive partner but may not release • enjoys making things happen, such as, squeezing a toy to make a noise • more sustained interest on toy or person for at least a few minutes • looks in the direction of loud noises • enjoys looking at themselves in a mirror • begins to understand cause and effect • shows fear of falling off high places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no interest in playing with or exploring toys • absence of head turning or startling in response to loud sounds (indicating possible hearing or listening difficulties)
Fine Motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brings hands to midline • uses a rudimentary pincer grasp when holding objects, i.e. all four fingers hold object against palm • transfers objects from one hand to the other • likes to bang objects together • picks up small objects in raking motion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not touching or reaching for interesting objects • excessive dribbling when not teething • delay in development of pincer grasp

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enjoys casting objects from high chair or cot • may put objects in mouth while playing • smile is symmetrical • exhibits purposeful reaching and grasping • may poke and pay attention to small objects, e.g. raisin • uses all of their fingers and their thumb to pick up a spoon or toy ,(refined pincer grasp using thumb and forefinger from 9 months) • releases objects but not smoothly 	
Vision & Hearing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visually alert to people and environment • able to see small objects • determines relative position of objects in visual field and has smooth visual attention to moving objects • turns to sounds, particularly voice • locates sounds, loud and soft, from above and below, and either side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looks at objects too closely turning or tilting head to use only one eye to look at objects • abnormal eye movements • poking or excessively rubbing eyes • poor or monotonous vocalisations, may indicate hearing or listening difficulties
Language and Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • babbles using mixed consonants, e.g. da dee goo dee bow and repeats in sequence • babbles with inflection • engages in reciprocal vocalisations with an adult • uses repeated sounds “baba”, “mama”, “dada”, “nana” • imitates vocalisations especially vowels/playful vocal sounds, e.g. blows “raspberries” • tries to imitate sounds, e.g. coughing • responds to familiar words like daddy and bye-bye especially combined with physical cues such as waving or pointing • expresses emotions with different sounds and expressions, e.g. squeal in delight and grunt in protest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responds to name by turning head or shifting gaze • understands the word ‘no’ but does not comply • no tuneful babbling • no babbling with varied vowels or consonants or vocalising with repeated sounds • doesn’t respond to name by turning head or shifting gaze • limited variation in pitch tone • doesn’t attend to human voice, music or singing
Other	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental/carer concerns • regression of skills

12 months developmental milestones

12 months developmental milestones	An infant should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
	Social/Emotional	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> initiates and play interactive games, e.g. Pat-a-Cake and Peek-a-Boo enjoys simple imaginative and repetitive play engages in turn-taking games and 'conversations' with adults indicates wants and show toys to others places objects in and out of a container, once shown shows increasing interest in other children demonstrates understanding of use of familiar objects, e.g. telephone shows affection to familiar people and now showing preference for one or more adults shows likes/dislikes and tests parent's reactions seeks parental proximity when approached by a stranger will say or shake head for 'no' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no established routine around eating, sleeping and playing prolonged frequent tantrums non-responsive to caregiver and displays very limited range of emotions shows no obvious distress if separated from caregiver not trying to show things, e.g. doesn't hold out a toy and look at parent not joining in with social games, i.e. peekaboo
	Personal/Social	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sips from cup with assistance finger feeds and chews starts holding objects such as a spoon and cup and attempt self-feeding cooperates in dressing by pushing arms/legs through clothing enjoys taking off shoes and socks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> poor appetite and refusing food difficulty with texture transition not showing a desire to try things on their own
	Gross Motor	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> moves to get a toy out of reach crawls on hands and knees and pull up to stand takes steps holding onto support and may start walking with flat feet requires no or little support while standing squats to play sits for indefinite time and can pivot in all directions and turns to crawl lowers self to floor from standing position using furniture for support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiences tremors of hands and/or limbs not crawling in association with other gross motor concerns not taking weight through the legs evidenced decrease or increase in muscle tone asymmetry of posture or consistent asymmetry of movement no independent sitting

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pushes ball on the floor with hand and attempt to throw objects pull objects out of containers and put back in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • persistent standing on toes or toe walking • not pushing a ball with hand in sitting position
<h3>Cognition</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiating joint attention • actively explore surroundings • enjoys simple cause and effect toys, e.g. "jack in the box" • established object and person permanence • looks around if asked 'where' something is • imitates simple adult behaviour in play, e.g. spin, push and pull objects • points to objects in a picture book • sustains prolonged eye gaze and eye contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continues to mouth objects most of the time • not manipulating and playing with toys in a purposeful manner • not becoming accustomed to people, or familiar environmental noises • not showing curiosity or motivation to move, explore and interact
<h3>Fine Motor</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mature pincer grasp, can pick up object between thumb and index finger • pokes objects with index finger • pulls a string to secure a toy • holds two toys, one in each hand using tripod grasp and bangs together • removes pegs from pegboard • builds a tower with two blocks • turns pages in a book but may turn many pages at once 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not reaching, grasping or releasing objects appropriately • limited use of gestures (waving, pointing, shaking head) • not pointing to show things
<h3>Vision & Hearing</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shifts between far and near vision tasks • tracks an object across a 180° arc • recognises familiar people approaching from a distance • locates sounds from all directions and responds to own name • begins to sing-along to familiar songs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looks at objects too closely • turns / tilts head to use only one eye to look at objects • abnormal eye movements • unable to fixate on very small colourful objects, e.g. 'hundreds and thousands' • not looking at objects that move • poking or excessively rubbing eyes • recurrent ear infections; not responding when called • lack of awareness to normal environmental sounds

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor or monotonous vocalisations, may indicate hearing or listening difficulties • not turning when name is called
Language and Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses conversational babble “jargon”, loudly and often, using most vowels and many consonants • imitates words and sounds, e.g. “uh oh” • says mama or dada discriminately and says 1-3 words • uses immature babbling, to talk to favourite toy (usually a toy with a face) • indicates wants in ways other than crying, e.g. pointing • shakes head for ‘no’ • shows by behaviour or words that understands simple instructions associated with a gesture • repeats sounds and gestures for attention • learns the meaning of new words each week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unable to make sounds in response to familiar people • not reacting to ‘no’ • not responding verbally or non-verbally to simple questions, e.g. where is daddy • no response to his/her name • no babbling sounds (babbling should definitely be present) • not smiling or laughing at carer/ other family members • not using/limited use of gestures (waving, pointing, shaking head) • not pointing to show interest (e.g. point to plane)
Other	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental/ carer concerns • significant loss of skills

18 months developmental milestones

18 months developmental milestones	A toddler should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
	Social/Emotional	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows strong sense of self through assertiveness, very quick tempered and wants everything 'now', emotionally dependent on caregiver, alternating between independence and being 'clingy' • develops pro-social behaviour, i.e. responding to emotion they saw by verbal response, "sad mummy", or physical, e.g. hugging or bring object to comfort • separation anxiety; shows fear of strangers, new events or separation from caregivers • uses familiar objects to self-soothe, e.g. blanket or teddy • keen to explore environment but poor self-control and low risk awareness • demonstrates social referencing or awareness of signals from caregiver • starts to understand rules and limits, complying some of the time • enjoys hiding • babbles or jabber to get attention • distinguishes between self and other • maintains joint attention to an object with an interactive partner • no longer takes toys to mouth (unless teething) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaviour that seems overly active in all social settings and has difficulty to self-calm • highly negative, demanding, uncooperative and stubborn for sustained periods • uncommunicative, passive or withdrawn • demands constant attention • dislikes being held, hugged or cuddled • not seeking out caregiver or familiar adult when upset or scared • does not enjoy eye contact or cuddles
	Personal/ Social	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asks for a drink by pointing or gesturing • drinks from a cup independently and holds cup between both hands and drinks without too much spillage • helps in cleaning and grooming routines, e.g. rub hands together with water or partially dries hands when given a towel • uses spoon but will be messy and can remove food from spoon with tongue • copies grooming activities, e.g. brushing hair • shows interest in pulling off clothes • may participate in selecting clothes, e.g. requesting favourite shoes • begins to show awareness of urgent toilet needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not participating in any grooming or dressing activities • needs to be fed all of the time, no interest in self-feeding • difficulty with texture transition

Gross motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cruises around furniture • walks with 'flat feet' feet only slightly apart • walks but may still stumble if pathway is obstructed • walks up and down stairs while holding onto railing or parent's hand, may attempt stairs alone on hands and knees • carries large toy while walking • climbs onto furniture • imitates kicking a ball • bends over and picks up an object without falling over • puts away toys • pushes and pulls wheeled toys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unstable gait • persistent toe walking • not attempting to walk or furniture cruising • repetitive behaviour, e.g. rocking, spinning or hand flapping • experiences tremors of hands and/or limbs
Cognition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands causality and hands a mechanical toy to caregiver to activate • imitates complex adult behaviour in play, e.g. place a small ball accurately onto a toy to get it to fall through tunnels and loops • examines toys to see how they work • begins to use symbolic play, e.g. 'read a book' • explores to find new experiences • recognises self in a mirror and attempts to interact with images of self • points to body parts and specific objects when asked • more imaginative play, imitates simple everyday activities, and acts out familiar routines, e.g. feeding dolly • follows simple instructions, e.g. "come here" • offers objects and points to request the associated word, e.g. offer toy car for parents to respond "car" or "brmm brmm" • plays alone but prefers to be close to familiar adult or child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very limited attention span • not interested in events occurring in their environment, e.g. doesn't look up from activity if someone new enters the room • not able to imitate simple everyday activities • lack of imagination when playing with toys, e.g. constantly spinning wheels of a toy car • obsessive to routines, very upset if they change
Fine Motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses pincer grip to pick up tiny objects • scribbles with large crayon onto paper • builds tower with 3+ wooden blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overly frustrated in fine motor skill play • reluctance in touching textured materials, e.g. sand • immature hand function noted, e.g. reach, grasp,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targets objects and manipulates them • handles two objects at a time • puts round piece in form board • places objects inside each other and in and out of containers • drops and throws objects/ toys • points to distant interesting objects or familiar people • enjoys looking at simple picture books and points with index finger to colourful item on page, can turn several pages over at a time 	<p>release</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reluctance to use both hands in play • not demonstrating fine pincer grasp
<h3>Vision & Hearing</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shifts between far and near vision tasks • tracks an object across a 180° arc • recognises familiar people approaching from a distance • listens and responds to people talking to them • begins to sing-along to familiar songs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looks at objects too closely • turns or tilts head to use only one eye to look at objects • abnormal eye movement • poking or excessively rubbing eyes • not able to fixate on very small colourful objects, e.g. 'hundreds and thousands' • lack of awareness to normal environmental sounds • not responding when called • recurrent ear infections • poor or monotonous vocalisations, may indicate hearing or listening difficulties
<h3>Language & Communication</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • much expressive babble, mix of jargon and intelligible words • consistently uses more than 10-20 recognisable words, e.g. "dada", "mama", "nanna", "up", "no", "yum", "uh-oh" and understands many more • consistently use shortened versions of other, more complex words, e.g. 'ba' for bottle or 'wo' for wolf • some echolalia, i.e. repeating a word or phrase • demonstrates continual steady increase in expressive language • understands simple words and sentences, e.g. sit on the chair • identifies two or more familiar objects from one request, e.g. pick up your bottle and dummy • understands 'no' but does not always comply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not attempting to use words • not using gestures to communicate • parents unsure of their child's different needs and wants, e.g. difficult to know if their child is tired or hungry • speech is totally echolalic • language and communication skills are regressing • limited expressive babble • doesn't say single words • lack of understanding of simple instructions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • says 'no' and other protests more frequently • over extends the meanings of words, e.g. anything with four legs and a tail is 'doggie' • shows communicative intent with gestures, e.g. waves bye-bye • enjoys rhymes and singing games, attempts to sing • obeys simple commands • demands a desired object by pointing and sometimes loud urgent vocalisations or single words 	
Other		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental/ carer concerns • significant loss of skills

2 years developmental milestones

	A toddler should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
2 years developmental milestones	Social/ Emotional	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experiences temper tantrums when feeling frustrated or when trying to make self-understood • shows shame if they do not succeed in a task and pride if they do succeed; experience a broad range of emotions, e.g. self-consciousness • plays independently but will intermittently return to familiar people for reassurance or to share experiences • defends own possessions, rarely sharing • sometimes strike another child in frustration but will respond to adult instruction and may apologise with adult guidance • seeks adult reassurance for their own and other's emotional needs, e.g. will fetch an adult if a playmate hurts themselves • labels emotions of others • recognises self in mirror • begins to comply to verbal directions • enjoys stories, focus shifts from action of characters to feelings • expresses anxiety if an object is flawed • greets familiar adults and children • separation anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaviour that seems overly active in all social settings and difficulty to self-calm • no or limited eye contact (depends on cultural mores) • dislikes being held, hugged or cuddled • frequently difficult to console when upset • prefers to play alone all of the time • not seeking out caregiver or familiar adult when upset or scared • uncommunicative, passive or withdrawn • demands constant attention /highly negative/demanding, uncooperative and stubborn
	Personal/ Social	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses cup with minimal supervision and competent use of spoon to feed self • puts on shoes, socks and shorts • cooperates in dressing • unbuttons large buttons; unzip large zip • brushes teeth, with help • washes and dry hands • tells caregiver if 'wet', and may indicate need to use potty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not competently using a spoon to feed • difficulties with feeding, e.g. vomiting, avoidance of textured food • not participating in any grooming or dressing activities

Gross Motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • runs on whole foot, can stop and start and avoid obstacles • climbs up and down stairs, two feet to a step, while holding onto railing or parent hand • sits on a tricycle, propels bike forward with feet rather than using pedals • kicks a ball forward by walking into it and keeps balance • throws tennis ball overhand from standing position without falling over • jumps down from low step • squats to play or rest and able to rise to feet without using hands • walks backward and sideways a few steps and walks on a straight line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not walking competently, e.g. persistent toe walking or walking with marked in or out toeing • continues to crawl as preferred way to move around • asymmetry of movement/posture/muscle bulk • unstable gait • experiences tremors of hands and/or limbs
Fine motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manipulative skills improving, able to pick up tiny objects and place in small container • stacks 4 to 7 blocks and can line blocks in a row • matches shapes in a simple jigsaw • holds crayon using thumb and two fingers, able to circular scribble • mostly uses preferred hand • twists and turns objects, e.g. open door with doorknob and turn lights on and off • enjoys pouring and filling • turns over pages one at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoids play with fine motor toys • unusual dislike of various textures and surfaces • immature hand function noted, e.g. reach, grasp, release • experiences tremors in hands
Vision and hearing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • normal visual acuity • recognises self and familiar adults in photographs • matches picture of reducing sizes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • turns or tilts head to use only one eye to look at objects • abnormal eye movement • poking or excessively rubbing eyes • not able to fixate on very small colourful objects • looks at objects too closely • lack of awareness to normal environmental sounds • not responding when called • recurrent ear infections • poor or monotonous vocalisations, may indicate hearing or listening difficulties

Language and Communication

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• uses over 50 recognisable words but understands many more (typically over 200 words)• steady increase in expressive language, and talks to self for lengthy periods• puts 2 or more words together to form sentences• echolalia constant with one or more stressed words repeated• uses pronouns but often with incorrect syntax, e.g. “we felled down”• asks many “ what”, “where”, “why” questions• refers to self by name or “me”• uses no and not appropriately• attempts conversations with a mixture of words and jargon• listens to a story• joins in nursery rhymes and action songs• correctly names familiar objects when asked, e.g. cat, dog, baby | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• language and communication skills are regressing• using less than 50 words or not combining 2 words together• expressive language is unintelligible to adults most of the time• not saying two word combinations• not following simple instructions or identifying common objects or body parts• has difficulty attending and listening to stories• not recognising or understanding words for familiar objects |
|---|---|

Cognition

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• more imaginative play• uses structured pretend play with beginning, middle and end• uses objects abstractly to act out familiar activities during play, e.g. uses a block as a phone• plays in a focused way for 20 minutes or more• attempts to explain how a toy operates to an adult or another child, e.g. you push like this• retains a mental picture of an object after it is no longer present, e.g. will know if something missing from a familiar room• identifies major body parts• engages in parallel play, i.e. play alongside peers but not engaging with them• follows instructions of increasing complexity, e.g. switch off the television in the lounge room• sorts by primary colour and classification, e.g. dogs and cats are animals• matches by size and colour ,e.g. select two cups of the same size• doesn't avoid dangers even when told what is dangerous, e.g. run into road to fetch ball | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• avoidance of new environments, people and play activities• becomes highly distressed if routine changes in any way• not pointing to named objects• not using symbolic/pretend play• not able to follow simple questions, e.g. “put dolly in the box”• not able to categorise objects by family, e.g. dog and cat are animals |
|---|---|

Other

- parental/ carer concerns
- significant loss of skills

2 ½ years developmental milestones

A toddler should be able to do some or all of the following:		Warning signs to watch for:
2 ½ years developmental milestones	Social/Emotional	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very active, restless and resistant to restraint • little understanding of dangers, impulsive, and wants needs met straight away • has temper tantrums but less easily distracted • emotionally still very dependent on caregivers and needs reassurance in unfamiliar situations • enjoys watching other children play and occasionally joins in, but no concept of sharing toys or adult attention • separation anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of previous babbling, speech or social skills • dislikes being held, hugged or cuddled • behaviour that seems overly active in all social settings and has difficulty to self-calm • excessive temper tantrums in public places • withdrawn and doesn't participate in sharing stories about themselves • no sense of humour • no or limited eye contact
	Personal/Social	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eats skilfully with spoon and may use fork • pulls down pants when using potty or toilet but not able to pull them back up successfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulties with feeding, e.g. vomiting, avoidance of textured food • not participating in any grooming or dressing activities
	Gross motor	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • runs and climbs well • walks confidently upstairs and holds rail or hand downstairs, two feet to a step • jumps with two feet together from a low step • walks on tiptoe if shown • pushes and pulls large toys, but still has difficulty manoeuvring them around obstacles • kicks large ball but gently, and throws ball from hand at body level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently bumping into objects/ excessive falling • unstable gait • marked in or out toeing • experiences tremors in hands and/or limbs
Fine motor		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • builds 7+ block tower, using preferred hand • holds crayon with improved tripod grasp, using preferred hand, able to imitate straight line and circle • inserts various shapes into simple jigsaw and begins to correct the orientation of the shapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inability to manipulate play dough, stack blocks, immature pincer grasp • not able to circular scribble or imitate circle or lines • experiences tremors in hands 	
Vision & Hearing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognises fine details in picture books, and match picture of reducing sizes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of awareness to normal environmental sounds 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognises self in mirror • begins to match 3-4 colours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • turns or tilts head to use only one eye to look at objects • abnormal eye movement • poking or excessively rubbing eyes • not able to fixate on very small colourful objects, e.g. 'hundreds and thousands' • looks at objects too closely • no response when called • recurrent ear infections • poor or monotonous vocalisations, may indicate hearing or listening difficulties
<p>Language & Communication</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • now using 200+ recognisable words, mostly intelligible to familiar caregivers • developing syntax (grammar) • echolalia still present • stutters in eagerness • uses pronouns, "I", "me", "you", correctly • asks lots of questions; "what", "where", "why" • directs comments to caregivers about objects and interesting events • talks audibly and intelligibly to self while playing about events happening here and now • knows full name • recognises general family names categories, e.g. granny, baby • selects action pictures, e.g. who is eating • gets parents attention by vocalising , shouting or crying • uses more 'emotion' words • recites a few simple nursery rhymes • understands more complex instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language and communication not at appropriate age level • lack of interest in human voice, music, singing, books • unable to follow every day routines • uses only single words or 2 word phrases
<p>Cognition</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses objects abstractly to act out familiar activities during play, e.g. use a block as a phone • gives life to toys, e.g. dolly will talk • longer sustained role play, but still needs reassurance from familiar adult • begins to respond to social information on media as relevant to everyday experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no interest in playing with or exploring toys • lack of imaginative play, inappropriate use of toys • does not understand abstract concepts, e.g. I think, I feel or maybe

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more attentive to tasks and less vulnerable to distractions • adopts complimentary roles within play scenarios, e.g. mummy/baby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overly 'rigid' and 'obsessed' in daily routines
	Other	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental/carer concerns • significant regression of skills and abilities

3 years developmental milestones

3 years developmental milestones	A child should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:	
	Social/Emotional		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helps to pack away toys, if asked • attempts independent activities but with frequent frustration, e.g. trying to tie shoelace • enjoys playing with other children • more make-believe play • may need parental support to cope with transitions, e.g. play time to bedtime • develops understanding of concept of sharing • solicits adult assistance when they can't cope with situations, e.g. will tell an adult if someone hits them • more amenable but may still experience temper tantrums • settles themselves down after a period of excitement • shows empathy, e.g. will come looking for parent if sibling is upset, will hold or hug a sad friend • defers pleasure, e.g. will agree to put away toys before having an ice-cream • shows affection for younger siblings • exhibits a sense of humour • enjoys talking about themselves and their personal experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not extending trusting relationships to other adults and children with whom they are frequently around, e.g. kindergarten teacher • does not label their own emotions • highly negative, demanding and stubborn • demands constant attention • frequent aggressive behaviour towards other children or adults, e.g. hitting, kicking, biting • avoiding social situations even in familiar environments • overly active and inability to respond to instruction and self-calm in all social settings 	
	Personal/Social		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • washes own hands but needs help to dry them • dresses and undresses with supervision • brushes teeth, with help • asks for food and drink • eats competently with a fork and spoon • blows nose with prompting • holds small cup in one hand • anticipates the need for toilet and develop daytime control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not gaining independence with feeding, dressing and toileting • not able to communicate toileting needs • not competently using a spoon to feed 		

Gross motor		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moves in a coordinated way • walks upstairs with alternating feet, one foot to each step without holding, comes downstairs two feet to a step • runs using heel toe gait and able to avoid obstacle • stands and walk on tiptoes and briefly stand on one (preferred) foot once shown • rides a tricycle using pedals or keeps feet on pedals while being pushed • hops on one foot when hands held • climbs slides and playground equipment with agility • enjoys construction toys, sand and water play • catches a large ball between arms and body • strikes a suspended ball/balloon • throws a ball further • able to jump forward with two feet and keep balance • jumps down from lower a step 20cm high • jumps with two feet leaving the ground • stands spin slowly and keep balance • moves around obstacles and corners while running or pushing/pulling large toys • sits with feet crossed at ankles 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unusual dislike of a number of textures and surfaces • persistent toe walking/ marked in or/out toeing • experiences tremors in limbs • avoidance of physical activity • falls or trips frequently without obvious reason • asymmetry of movement/posture/muscle bulk/unstable gait • lack of sensory perception
Fine motor		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • turns pages of a book, one at a time • releases small objects accurately • builds a tower of six to nine blocks • holds crayon near the point and uses with good control, and copies circles, lines, crosses , 'V' 'H' 'T' and draws person with head and a few added features • cuts with toy scissors in one hand with paper held by adult • manipulate play dough into objects • threads large wooden beads • enjoys painting using large brush • matches two or three primary colours and may name colours 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not able to accurately copy a drawing of a line or circle • difficulty manipulating small objects • experiences tremors in hands

Vision & Hearing

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understands visual perspective taking, i.e. able to turn picture around to show | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• turns or tilts head to use only one eye to look at objects• abnormal eye movement• poking or excessively rubbing eyes• not able to fixate on very small colourful objects, e.g. 'hundreds and thousands'• looks at objects too closely• lack of awareness to normal environmental sounds• not responding when called• recurrent ear infections• poor or monotonous vocalisations, may indicate hearing or listening difficulties |
|---|--|

Language & communication

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• speaks sentences and use many different words• demonstrates continual, steady increase in expressive language• asks and answers simple questions• counts to five to ten objects• identifies a friend by naming• uses adjectives to describe objects, e.g. 'big, black dog'• uses directives to give instructions e.g. under, over, in• uses verb forms e.g. run, throw, swing• increasing use of social language, e.g. can I..., please...,• understands 1000 or more words• infers word meanings from context• learns 4-6 new words per day• listens and understands conversations, stories, songs and poems• identifies vocal changes when someone is reading and talking• pronounces words more clearly• understands more words than they can say• large vocabulary, understood by strangers, but still has many immature sound substitutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• not using more than 50 single words• not combining words• not regularly acquiring new words despite frequent exposures to a wide vocabulary• not understanding or using words to describe genders• reversing 'I' and 'you'• not using sentences with at least two components, e.g. "I ran the shops" instead of "I ran to the shops" |
|--|---|

<p>and simplified grammatical forms speech modulated in loudness and range of pitch and use many different words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses personal pronouns, e.g. I, you, he, me • verbal commentary to self and others during play • identifies objects by function 	
<p>Cognition</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands opposites e.g. fat and thin • understands abstract concepts e.g. I think feel, maybe • matches primary colours • matches picture to picture • counts to ten • follows multi-step instructions • asks questions about new situations and words • shows affection and generally more amenable, makes reference to emotions and can show empathy • completes simple form boards and puzzles • understands descriptive concepts • joins in 'make-believe play' with other children • vividly realised make-believe play, using invented people and objects as well as familiar activities or events • understands concept of sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doesn't avoid situations which are obviously dangerous, e.g. walks up to barking dog, touches fire • not accurately labelling common objects, e.g. dog, cat, bird • doesn't describe their own feelings • not using symbolic play
<p>Other</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental/carer concerns • significant regression of skills and abilities

3 ½ years developmental milestones

3 ½ years developmental milestones	A child should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:	
	Social/ Emotional		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loves stories and demands favourites likes to help adults, e.g. shopping, gardening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loss of previously acquired speech or social skills unable to label their own emotions correctly very demanding in wanting attention from parents very aggressive towards other children and reacts by hitting, kicking, scratching overly active and inability to respond to instruction and self-calm in all social settings 	
	Personal/ Social		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eats with a spoon and fork without spilling daytime toileting attained and may be dry at night dresses themselves but may need help with buttons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unsettled sleep often inability to self-dress and unawareness of toileting skills inability to play with peers 	
	Gross motor		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walks upstairs one foot per step, comes downstairs two feet on step walks on tiptoe competent at running pedals a tricycle, two-wheeler with trainers or a scooter stands on one leg, 5 seconds hops on one leg, 2- 3 hops jumps forward sequence five jumps catches ball in hands arms and pulls to chest kicks a ball and keeps balance strikes a ball with a bat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiences tremors in limbs poor posture in sitting and standing delayed or awkward running unable to pedal a tricycle asymmetry in movement/ unstable gait unable to hop on one or two legs avoidant of physical play/ tires easily dislikes playing on playground equipment 	
	Fine Motor		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> builds tower of nine ++ blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoids puzzles and constructional toys 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cuts paper with scissors neatly • paints with a brush 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finger feeding rather than using utensils • difficulties with dressing and buttons • experiences tremors in hands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large vocabulary and uses 3 -4 word sentences • speech is generally understandable even to strangers • uses many verbs in sentences and uses correct tense • understands and uses personal pronouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of gestures or mime more than words • speech unclear to strangers
Cognition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • matches two or more primary colours • counts to ten by rote • names and understand reasons for other people's emotions • competently match picture to picture • follows more complex instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has no concept to avoid danger, e.g. fire • does not show any form of self-emotions, e.g. smiling, happy, sad • not accurately naming common objects, e.g. dog, cat, cow
Other	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental/caregiver / teacher concerns • significant regression of skills and abilities

4 years developmental milestones

4 years developmental milestones

A child should be able to do some or all of the following:

Warning signs to watch for:

Social/emotional

- begins to develop their own identity and express personal feelings, needs and affections
- adopts behaviour of parents or other close caregivers
- may have imaginary friends
- differentiates between friends and peers
- enjoys reciprocal play, chasey, playing football
- learns to take turns and share with other children and adults
- expresses complex emotions and able to understand others emotions
- shows concern and sympathy for younger siblings and playmates if they are upset and help others who may be hurt or upset
- can be quarrelsome with playmates when doesn't get own way, and impertinent with adults
- understands need to argue with words rather than hitting
- understands past, present and future time
- shows awareness of standards and rules
- enjoys many and varied activities in all areas of development, e.g. painting, drawing, pasting, use of scissors, books, action songs, dressing up, construction puzzles
- develops a preference for special adults
- labels their own feelings and those of others based on their facial expressions, e.g. they can look at a picture book and say "she's scared"
- shows an interest in other children and copy what they do
- develops complex imaginative play such as playing 'house', dress-ups and uses themes from outside personal experience, e.g. bus driver, shop keeper
- enjoys helping with adult activities
- imitates and follow the leader
- displays emotions that are less intense and switch less rapidly; allowing them to sustain social interactions
- expresses a sense of self in terms of abilities, characteristics, preferences and actions, e.g. "look at me, I'm building a castle"

- limited eye contact with people in general
- cannot separate from parents without distress
- doesn't explore playground equipment
- doesn't take interest in other children or what is happening around them
- engages in play that remains repetitive and physical, with limited imaginative play
- plays alone or alongside other children rather than cooperating and sharing
- uncommunicative, passive or withdrawn
- overly active and inability to respond to instruction and self-calm in all social settings
- doesn't extend trusting relationships to other adults and children with whom they're frequently around, e.g. teacher
- often overly aggressive towards siblings or peers
- engages or fixated on only limited range of activities
- doesn't initiate play or seek others for shared enjoyment
- uncommunicative, passive or withdrawn
- overly active and inability to respond to instruction and self-calm in all social settings
- limited empathy and does not label their own or other's emotions correctly
- avoids social situations even in familiar environments
- demands constant attention

Personal/ Social

- eats competently with fork and spoon with little supervision
- spontaneously offers things to others to please friends
- undresses loose garments with ease, dress and undress independently (simple fastenings only)
- sociable and talkative during mealtimes
- brushes their teeth, with adult supervision
- shows pride in accomplishing new tasks
- feeds themselves with little spilling
- pours from a jug into a cup
- uses the toilet alone and begin to develop night time control
- washes and dry hands before eating and after toileting
- improves their ability to self-calm
- give and maintains appropriate eye contact during conversation and in classroom environment
- manages a variety of experiences within a classroom or small group setting and respond appropriately

- not gaining independence with feeding, dressing and toileting
- reluctant to try new and/or challenging tasks
- doesn't seem to notice when someone else has touched them
- not competently using a spoon and fork to feed
- dislikes varied tastes and textured food, overly 'fussy' eater

Gross motor

- stands on one foot and hop 2 or 3 times
- stands, walk and run on tiptoes
- balances on one foot (preferred) 4 – 8 seconds without losing balance or putting foot down
- confident in riding a tricycle and pedal easily to move
- walks backwards
- sits with legs crossed
- stands and broad jump
- easily moves, skip, dance to music
- increasing skills in ball games, throwing, catching, bouncing, kicking, and using a bat
- walks independently up and stairs, one foot per step
- bounces a large ball
- throws a large ball with 2 hands over head
- catches a large ball between arms and body, bending arms at the elbow

- experiences tremors in limbs
- unstable gait
- has persistent toe walking or significant in or out toeing
- cannot pedal a tricycle, bike or ride a scooter
- may be overly fearful/anxious when asked to climb equipment avoids physical activity /slow to learn or master new gross motor skills
- poor spatial awareness, e.g. bumps into things
- unable to catch, kick or throw a large ball
- not able to walk up and down stairs with one foot per step
- awkward heavy running with lots of arm movements

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kicks ball along the ground while moving behind it • runs on a flat surface turning sharp corners • participates with confidence in movement activities in the classroom and playground • walks a 2 metre straight line with good balance • jumps with 2 feet off the ground and over 15 cm • attempts a somersault 	
Fine motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displays hand preference • immediately stares at interesting small objects • touches and works with a variety of textures and grasps objects using all of hands confidently to manipulate clay or play dough • ties single knot by oneself • builds a tower of 10 or more blocks and bridges of 3 + blocks • threads small beads on a shoe lace • simple finger action songs, e.g. incy- wincy spider • draws a basic human figure with at least three body parts/features • holds a pencil in a dynamic tripod grasp with good control, copies crosses and letters 'V', 'H', 'T', and 'O' • cuts along a 10cm straight line (within 1cm) using scissors in one hand and the other hand holding the paper • screws and unscrews a small (2.5cm) lid • assembles constructive toys easily, e.g. duplo • unbuttons one or more buttons (either on their own clothing or their doll's clothing) • colours mostly within the lines in a colouring book (no more than 1cm outside the lines on most of the picture) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holds their head close to the paper when working • doesn't use non-preferred hand to assist and stabilize • difficulty with finger action songs, e.g. incy-wincy spider • shows difficulties with activities requiring rhythm and coordination, e.g. clapping games • immature adult pincer grasp and has difficulty in pencil control, e.g. colouring in, drawing lines, tracing, copying shapes and imitating cross and not able to draw simple pictures • doesn't hold a pencil at all or still holding in a fist ed grasp with pencil in palm of hand • doesn't demonstrate consistent hand preference • displays difficulty with turning paper and keeping thumbs on top when cutting with scissors • cannot use both hands together in play • pencil pressure on paper that is too heavy/light • experiences hand tremors • avoids fine motor activities • difficulty with cut and paste activities
Vision and hearing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • matches letters, and visual acuity tests can be performed • visual acuity now at adult level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • turns or tilts head to use only one eye to look at objects • abnormal eye movement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poking or excessively rubbing eyes • not able to fixate on very small colourful objects, e.g. 'hundreds and thousands' • looks at objects too closely • lack of awareness to normal environmental sounds • not responding when called • recurrent ear infections • poor or monotonous vocalisations, may indicate hearing or listening difficulties
<p>Language & Communication</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speech grammatically correct saying 2500 or more words • use possessives, e.g. 'his', 'theirs' • uses suffixes and helper verbs (have, had) to indicate past, ongoing and future • only shows a few immature sound substitutions • constructs a sentence length of approximately 5 -20 words • uses speech sounds 's', 'z', 'f', 'g', 'k', 'p', 'b', 'm', 'n', 't', 'd', 'l', 'sh', 'ch' • uses appropriate levels of volume, tone and inflection • it is appropriate for child not to use these sounds correctly 'j', 'r', 'v', 'th' • may have difficulty with 's' cluster words eg 'sp', 'st', 'sm', eg 'spoon' • talks of personal experiences, telling more complete stories from the start • listens to and participates in book reading • often initiates conversation • knows a few nursery rhymes which they can say, repeat and sing • names common objects and describe their characteristics, e.g. colour, size, shape and describe or identify functions • uses terms for spatial relationships, e.g. under, in front , behind or can demonstrate understanding of their meaning when asked • use words to express time, e.g. soon, now, later • begins to engage in word play and rhyming words • uses gender words, e.g. he/she, boy/girl • asks 'why' 'when' 'how' questions and the meaning of the words • understands some abstract concepts, e.g. 'before' and 'after' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not acquiring new words despite frequent exposures to a wide vocabulary • only able to talk about 'here' and 'now', can't talk about recent, past and future • not using grammatical markers such as verb endings or plurals • unable to respond to simple questions, who? where? what? • delayed speech milestones for age • not speaking clearly enough to be understood by other people and is only understood by mother or close family members • unable to hear a whisper or constantly asks for things to be repeated • not talking in sentences of 5 or more words

- counts by rote up to twenty or more and beginning to count objects by word
- uses pronouns correctly, e.g. I, she, he, her, him
- uses word endings such as 's', 'ed' and 'ing'
- claps syllables in words
- tells a simple story in the correct sequence
- names at least three items from a common category, e.g. identifies three pieces of fruit
- uses terms for shapes/size/colours/texture (may not always be accurate)
- verbalises as he/she carries out activities
- repeats words, phrases, syllables and even sounds
- applies general past tense rule to irregular past tense verbs, e.g. 'runned' for 'ran' and 'teached' for 'taught'
- applies general plural rule to irregular nouns, e.g. 'mouses' for 'mice' and 'tooths' for 'teeth'
- uses long sentences with a range of connecting words to join ideas, e.g. and, because
- child should be 100% intelligible to strangers, even though some speech differences (or substitutions) may be present

Cognition

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • counts ten or more objects • understands familiar object function, e.g. cup holds water • understands location concepts, e.g. under, next to, behind and in front • understands two stage instructions, e.g. wipe your feet and then find your name tag • identifies and matches objects, e.g. pictures of animals • knows their name, address and (usually) age • completes form boards and puzzles of 4-6 pieces • knows the difference between real and pretend • knows the difference between genders • understands routine daily events • begins to understand 'figures of speech', e.g. 'as fast as lightning' • understands qualitative concepts, e.g. empty, some, all • understands 'same' and 'different' • compares two weights and works out which is heavier • points to the longer of two lines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent difficulty with attention or concentration • doesn't generalise cause and effect, e.g. does not understand that a hot stove or fire can burn • appears to understand verbal instructions but cannot complete the task • unable to point to or count common objects • unable to put together a 6 piece interlocking puzzle • unable to recognise written numbers and letters • inaccurately labels common objects • slow to complete work |
|---|--|

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies objects by two attributes, e.g. find one that is big and blue and sort objects by size • understands conditionals, e.g. 'if it rains tomorrow, we will... • develops an understanding of categories, e.g. animals, food, clothing 	
Sensory Processing warning signs to watch for:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fidgets and moves on an ongoing basis, which interferes with daily routines, e.g. during mat time or on the chair • avoids movement activities, especially when feet leave the ground, e.g. playground/outdoor equipment or rough & tumble play • avoids messy play or is repelled by the feeling of certain textures, e.g. play dough, painting, sand • decreased awareness of temperature and pain compared to other children • distracted by visual information in the classroom, e.g. another child, items on the board • bothered by bright lights or shiny objects • does not always appear to hear what you say or appears to ignore you • difficulty following verbal instructions in the classroom • upset by loud noises and may put hands over ears • likes to put non-food objects in mouth and suck/chew on them, e.g. toys, pencils 	
Other	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental/carer/ teacher concerns • significant regression of skills and abilities

4 ½ years developmental milestones

4 ½ years developmental milestones

A child should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
Social/ Emotional	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displays concern for others in distress • shows a sense of humour in talk and activities. • enjoys playing with other children • more independent and strongly self-willed. • dramatic make-believe play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overly active and inability to respond to instruction and self-calm in all social settings • no interest in other children or what is happening around him/her • not sharing or cooperating when playing with others • engages in play that remains repetitive and physical, with limited imaginative play • doesn't seem to notice when someone has touched them
Personal/ Social	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eats skilfully with spoon and fork. • washes and dries hand, brushes teeth. • undresses and dresses except for laces, ties and back buttons • may be out of nappies during the night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cannot feed oneself • dislike of varied tastes and textured food, overly 'fussy' eater • difficulty in coordinating hands to tie laces • unable to dress oneself
Gross Motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climbs ladders and trees • hops on one foot • stands, walk, and runs on tiptoe • sits with legs crossed • expert rider of tricycle, executing sharp u-turns easily • shows increasing skill in ball games, throwing, catching, using a bat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experiences tremors (mostly arms and/or legs) • poor spatial awareness e.g. bumps into things • awkward gait when running • persistent toe walking or significant in or out toeing • avoids physical activity • unable to throw a large ball with direction
Fine motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • builds a tower of ten or more, and can build 3 steps with 6 cube • holds a pencil with good control • copies cross and the letters V, H, T and O • draws a person with head, legs, body and usually arms and fingers • neatly cut with scissors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty with activities requiring rhythm and coordination, e.g. clapping hands • difficulty in pencil control, e.g. colouring in, drawing lines and tracing • does not demonstrate consistent hand preference • difficulty with copying shapes and imitating cross

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holds their head close to the paper when working • does not use non-preferred hand to assist and stabilise • hand tremor
Language & Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speech is grammatically correct and completely intelligible • listens to and tells long stories, sometimes confusing fact and fantasy • frequently asking questions ,‘why,’ ‘when,’ and ‘how’. • knows several nursery rhymes and can repeat or sing correctly • gives full name, home address and age. • uses speech sounds ‘s’ and ‘z’ • uses ‘j’ sound correctly • appropriate for child not to use these sounds correctly ‘r’, ‘v’, ‘th’ • child should be 100% intelligible to strangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not speaking clearly enough to be understood by other people and is only understood by mother or close family members • not using grammatical markers such as verb endings or plurals • not acquiring new words despite frequent exposures to a wide vocabulary • only able to talk about ‘here’ and ‘now’ (can’t talk about recent, past and future) • unable to hear a whisper or constantly asks for things to be repeated • unable to respond to simple questions (who? where? what?)
Cognition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • matches and name four primary colours correctly • counts by rote up to 20 (or more) and listens to, and tells long stories • understands abstract concepts, e.g. ‘one of’, ‘before’ ,‘after’, ‘if’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doesn’t generalise cause and effect, e.g. no understanding that a hot stove or fire can burn • consistent difficulty with attention or concentration • unable to put together a 6 piece interlocking puzzle • appears to understand verbal instructions but cannot complete the task • fidgets and moves on an ongoing basis, which interferes with daily routine, e.g. during mat time or on the chair • avoids movement activities, especially when feet leave the ground e.g. playground/outdoor • no recognition of written numbers or letters inaccurately labels common objects • unable to point to or count objects

	Other
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• parental/carer / teacher concerns• significant regression of skills and abilities

5 years developmental milestones

5 years developmental milestones	
A child should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
Social/ Emotional	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chooses own friends and plays cooperatively with peers most of the time with some conflict and negotiation within the play interactions (co-operative play) • understands need for rules, fair play and sharing • creates realistic and planned story lines, using props to extend play scenario • develops self-regulation, modulates emotions and expresses socially acceptable responses to events • responds more appropriately and sympathetically to peers who are hurt or upset • solves problems and suggests solutions to problems with other children, while still seeking adult help • copes with the absence of familiar adults for longer periods • understands meaning of time in relation to daily program • engages in doll/teddy play – doll is given attributes, e.g. naughty, tired and uses own language • have two themes going at one play time, with added ‘sub plots’, e.g. ‘sick baby in family life scenario’ • develops an understanding of the cause of feelings and that others may feel differently • learns constructive coping strategies to help manage intense emotions, e.g. relaxation techniques, approach and discuss feelings with a teacher • confident in moving into a group of other children and suggesting play ideas • seeks the acceptance and friendship of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited eye contact (depending on cultural mores) • limited empathy and does not label their own or other’s emotions correctly • difficulty getting along with peers • uncommunicative, passive or withdrawn • overly active and inability to respond to instruction and self-calm in all social settings • doesn’t extend trusting relationship to other adults and children with whom they are frequently around, e.g. teacher • frequent aggressive behaviour towards other children or adults, e.g. hitting kicking, biting or scratching • avoids social situations even in familiar environments • demands constant attention
Personal/ Social	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eats competently with fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife • washes and dries face and hands • combs and brushes hair with help • dresses and undresses independently, puts on socks and shoes, placing shoes on the correct feet • navigates a computer keyboard and mouse • serves themselves using utensils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cannot competently use a spoon, fork and knife to feed • difficulty with buttons and zips • cannot wash or dry hands • reluctant to try new and/or challenging tasks • needs help with feeding, dressing and toileting • overly ‘fussy’ eater

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives and maintains appropriate eye contact (depends on cultural background) during conversation and in classroom environment • manages a variety of experiences within classroom, responds appropriately and maintains focus on the activity at hand • zips a coat and buttons/unbuttons (with adult coaching) • awareness of personal hygiene needs, e.g. cleans up or grooms when appropriate 	
Gross Motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skips on alternate feet and hop on one foot 10 or more times, right left • stands on one foot for at least 8-10 seconds, right and left and can stand on preferred foot, arms folded • catches a medium sized ball between arms and body and strike at a rolled ball, ride a bicycle with/without training wheels • displays enough arm strength to hold up their body for 'Wheelbarrows' • participates with confidence in movement activities in the classroom and playground • bends over and touches toes without flexing knees • walks easily on a narrow line • skilled at climbing sliding, swinging and other stunts • jumps rope and can do so for extended period of time • jumps with two feet off the ground and jump forwards • moves rhythmically to music • plays ball games fairly well, including rules, e.g. simple scoring • holds an aeroplane position for a short period i.e. lie on tummy and extend arms and legs • holds a 'tummy curl' position for a short period • maintains an even gait in stepping and walk backward quickly • demonstrates clear contrasts between slow and fast movement while travelling • shows an interest in games of chasing and fleeing • coordinates movements for swimming or bike riding • maintains balance whilst moving quickly, e.g. playing games such as tag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • persistent toe walking or walking with significant in or out toeing • unable to pedal a tricycle or a bike with trainer wheels • unable to throw/catch a medium ball • cannot walk along a line • easily loses balance when moving • slow to learn or master new gross motor skills • avoids physical activity/tires easily • experiences tremors, mostly arms and/or legs • difficulty with activities requiring rhythm and coordination • unable to stand on one foot more than 2-3 seconds • unable to hop on one foot more than 4-5 times (either leg) and/or able to hop on one foot only • poor spatial awareness, e.g. bumps into things
Fine motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • copies letters, e.g. V, H, T, C, A, X without tracing • copies a cross, R and L oblique strokes (/and /), a square, circle and triangle accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unable to draw simple pictures • difficulty with cut and paste activities

<p>without tracing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draws a man that is recognisable with head, facial features, arms, legs, but with little attention to shape or detail • shows more detailed drawings, e.g. windows, door in a house ,curtains • builds three dimensional block structures • shows improved scissor skills (cutting curves and corners) can cut a strip of paper neatly • copies their first name(letters may be large, backward or reversed) and begins learning to write letters • colours in a simple picture mainly within the lines using hand movements not whole arm • counts fingers on hand with index finger of other hand • touches and work with a variety of textures and grasps objects using all of hand confidently, e.g. manipulating clay or play dough • copies simple patterns using concrete objects, e.g. ball, pencil, car, block 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty printing their name by copying • pencil pressure on paper that is too heavy/light • difficulty with pencil control, e.g. colouring in, drawing lines or shapes, tracing • doesn't use non-preferred hand to assist and stabilise paper on the table • holds their head close to the paper when working • experiences hand tremors • avoids fine motor activities • difficulty with activities requiring rhythm and coordination e.g. clapping games • difficulty with hand action songs e.g. incy-wincy spider
<h3>Language and Communication</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks and understands 4500 words or more and repeat sentences as long as 10 words • uses 'r' sound correctly • produces 's' cluster words appropriately eg 'sp', 'st', 'sm', eg 'spoon' • appropriate for child not to use 'v' and 'th' sounds correctly • speech is grammatically correct and completely intelligible • uses the speech sounds SH, CH, I,H,J, S blends and L blends as well as those achieved in earlier years • uses more complex verbs, e.g. think, know, like, conjunctions, e.g. but, if, so, or applies past tense rule to irregular past tense words, e.g. 'runned' for 'ran' and 'teached' for 'taught' • narrates and joins several sentences together to recount a past event or tell a story • learns specialised words for particular areas of interest, e.g. koalas, dinosaurs, snakes and birds • displays intelligible and fluent speech in expressing ideas, in spite of articulation problems • participates in shared book sessions • speaks complex sentences, e.g. beginning with 'I think/know'; containing 'who', 'where', 'how' • shows skill in using different voice levels, phrasing and rate of speech appropriate to the audience, purpose and occasion • identifies sounds in words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delayed speech milestones for age • unable to hold a simple conversation • unable to join short sentences into longer ones using other connecting words other than 'and', e.g. because, when or but • unable to understand instructions with three parts • unable to retell a simple story in the right sequence • difficulty with rhyming words, breaking words into syllables, initial sound identification and poor alphabet knowledge • doesn't speak clearly enough to be understood by strangers • doesn't respond to questions e.g. what/ why? • often makes grammatical errors • doesn't regularly acquire new words despite frequent exposures to a wide vocabulary

- able to produce 'L' sound (leg instead of weg)
- uses words that end in 'ed' such as walked, jumped or played, when talking about something that already happened
- learns to converse with each other, negotiates roles and problem solves in dramatic play and learns the rules of talking politely
- shares experiences verbally, tells stories and gives a short talk to children at school, e.g. show and tell

Cognition

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asks questions about abstract words and practises • knows their name, age, address and birthday • understands 3 stage unrelated instructions, e.g. stand up, touch your nose and clap your hands • sub categorises objects e.g. farm/zoo animals • expands understanding of figures of speech and begins to understand some idioms, e.g. 'a change of heart' • links sequences of events together and comment on their relationship • recognises and names a greater range of colours • follows instructions and answers questions without needing further explanation • understands concepts, e.g. between, above, around, before and after • assembles 7-9 piece jigsaw • replies to complex questions, e.g. why and how questions • counts 15 or more objects • generates specific vocabulary from familiar categories, e.g. types of food • understands verbal explanations of phenomena that are not directly experienced, as long as the child has had similar experiences • understands 'before' and 'after' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unable to assemble a 9 piece jigsaw • appears to understand verbal instruction but cannot complete the task • inaccurately labels common objects • doesn't understand or generalise cause and effect, e.g. doesn't learn to not touch hot water to avoid getting burnt • difficulty with attention or concentration • slow to complete work |
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Sensory processing warning signs

- fidgets and moves a lot of the time, which interferes with daily routine, e.g. during mat time or sitting on a chair
- avoids movement activities, especially when feet leave the ground e.g. playground/outdoor equipment or rough & tumble play
- avoids messy play or is repelled by the feeling of certain textures, e.g. play dough, painting, sand
- seems not to notice when someone else has touched him or her
- decreased awareness of temperature and pain compared to other children

- distracted by visual information in the classroom, e.g. another child, items on the board
- becomes agitated by bright lights or shiny objects
- doesn't always appear to hear what you say or appears to ignore you
- difficulty following verbal instructions in the classroom
- becomes upset by loud noises and may put hands over ears
- likes to put non-food objects in mouth and suck/chew on them
- difficulty with attention and concentration

Other warning signs

- parental/carer/ teacher concerns
- significant regression of skills and abilities

6 years developmental milestones

	A child should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
6 years developmental milestones	Social/ Emotional	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plays with same-sex children and gender-specific toys • understands the perspective of others and engages in socially appropriate behaviour conducive to making friends • shares with others • engages in complex social pretend play • shows understanding of pride, gratitude, shame, worry, jealousy • uses private speech to calm self down • follows the rules • develops and displays fears, e.g. of the dark, dogs, thunderstorms, harm to loved ones and fear of separation from family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently fearful of and avoids active daily play • limited eye contact (depends on cultural mores) • difficulty getting along with peers • uncommunicative, passive or withdrawn • behaviour that seems out of control or hyperactive in all settings • frequent aggressive behaviour towards other children or adults, e.g. hitting, kicking, biting or scratching • avoids social situations even in familiar environments
	Personal/ Social	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • combs and brushes hair independently • blows nose independently • hangs up clothes • ties shoe laces with adult assistance • cuts with a knife independently • gives and maintains appropriate eye contact during conversation and in classroom environment (can depend on cultural mores) • manages a variety of experiences within a classroom, responds appropriately and maintains focus on the activity at hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty transitioning between activities, e.g. doesn't want to stop and start • reluctant to try new and/or challenging tasks • needs help with feeding, dressing and toileting
Gross Motor		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skips with a rope, using alternating feet • throws and catches a small ball competently, e.g. tennis ball • hops a distance of 15 metres • swings a bat • rides two wheel bicycle independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unable to throw and catch a small ball • unable to skip • stumbles/falls frequently and/or is fearful when feet leave the ground • slow to learn or master new gross motor skills 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competently controls their body in play, e.g. monkey bars, climbing • carries larger items/load competently • participates with confidence in movement activities in the classroom and playgroup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experiences tremors (mostly arms and/or legs) • avoids physical activity • poor body spatial awareness
Fine Motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses mature pencil grasp for handwriting, drawing and colouring, with movement only from fingers • draws a person with most body features, with attention to shape and detail • touches and works with a variety of textures and grasps objects using all of hand confidently, e.g. manipulates clay or play dough • uses scissors skilfully for complex shapes • folds and cuts paper into simple shapes • holds a brush or pencil between thumb and forefinger • draws a wide range of shapes, including a three lined cross and oblique cross • prints name and writes some letters • steadies paper with one hand while writing with the other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent difficulty ruling up a page • difficulties with construction games/activities, e.g. building 'lego' • avoids or is slow to learn new games or movement tasks • difficulty opening containers/lunchbox or tying shoelaces • writing - barely legible • awkward or tense pencil grip • poor speed of printing • avoids fine motor activities • pencil pressure on paper that is too heavy/light • difficulty with pencil control, e.g. colouring in, drawing lines or shapes, tracing • doesn't use non-preferred hand to assist and stabilise • holds their head close to the paper when working • experiences hand tremors • difficulty with cut and paste activities • difficulty with activities requiring rhythm and coordination, e.g. clapping games
Language and Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks and understands 8000 or more words • uses 'v' sound correctly • uses the speech sounds 'r', 'v' blends as well as those achieved in earlier years • it is appropriate for child not to use the 'th' sound correctly (this is appropriate until 8 years of age) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delayed speech milestones for age • doesn't regularly acquire new words despite frequent exposures to a wide vocabulary

- thinks of words starting and ending with particular sounds
 - displays speech which is fluent and grammatically correct in verb tenses, word order and sentence structure
 - memorises songs and television jingles
 - uses plurals, appropriate tenses and questions
 - imitates slang and profanity; finds 'bathroom' talk extremely funny
 - uses language rather than tantrums or physical aggression to express displeasure, e.g. 'that's mine! give it back!'
 - verbalises the sounds of letters, e.g. recognise letters and the sounds they make
- talks self through steps required in simple problem-solving situations (although the logic may be unclear to adults)

Cognition

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knows colours, shapes and sizes • begins to understand concept of equivalence, e.g. that short and wide and tall and narrow containers hold the same amount • compare, the concepts of bigger and smaller, part and whole • understands time concepts, e.g. today, tomorrow, yesterday • recognises seasons and major holidays • arranges objects from smallest to largest, shortest to longest and lightest to heaviest • understands quality of an objects remains the same when arranged differently, e.g. ball of clay is the same amount when flattened • holds up and correctly names right and left hands fairly consistently • understands money and identifies familiar coins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty copying from the classroom board • difficulty spacing and/or forming shapes/letters correctly • skips or re-reads words or lines • gets left and right confused more than peers • has no recognition of written numbers or letters • seems to understand verbal instructions but cannot complete the task • inaccurately labels common objects • short attention span or limited ability to concentrate • slow to complete work |
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Sensory Processing warning signs

- fidgets and moves on an ongoing basis, interfering with daily routine, e.g. mat time or on the chair
- avoids movement activities, especially when feet leave the ground, e.g. playground/outdoor equipment /rough & tumble play
- avoids messy play or is repelled by the feeling of certain textures, e.g. play dough, painting, sand
- doesn't appear to notice when someone else has touched him or her
- decreased awareness of temperature and pain compared to other children
- difficulty standing in line or close to other people
- becomes distracted by visual information in the classroom, e.g. another child, items on the board

- bothered by bright lights or shiny objects
- doesn't always appear to hear what you say or appears to ignore you
- difficulty following verbal instructions in the classroom
- upset by loud noises and may put hands over ears
- likes to put non-food objects in mouth and suck/chew on them

Other warning signs

- any parental/carer or teacher concern
- significant regression of skills and abilities

7-8 years developmental milestones

	A child should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
7-8 years developmental milestones	Social/ Emotional	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participates in well-established rule-based games • resolves conflicts without seeking adult intervention • understands the individual strengths and interests of other children • displays a need for their own place, e.g. at the table or in the car • participates in team games and sporting activities • shows an awareness of the need of others and understands their point of view • learns more about talking to their friends e.g. negotiation, winning arguments, listening, how to start and finish a conversation appropriately • same-gender playmates • shows an interest in organised club and group activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prefers playing alone and has a lack of interest in other children or social play • doesn't use problem-solving skills if frustrated or doesn't get their own way • withdraws when there are changes in the environment or routine
	Personal/ Social	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates independence in most aspects of self-care • uses a knife to spread and cut • displays modesty and self-awareness and develops a sense of privacy • take responsibility for a daily task, e.g. setting the table • selects clothes appropriately • understands and follows through routines, e.g. getting ready for school • aware of own body and movement and compares it to their friends • forms opinions about moral values and attitudes • gives and maintains appropriate eye contact during conversation and in the classroom environment (can depend on cultural mores) • manages a variety of experiences within a classroom, responds appropriately and maintains focus on the activity at hand • ties shoe laces independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relies greatly on caregiver for bathing, grooming and feeding • has persisting self-centred focus, i.e. their problems are always somebody else's fault
Gross Motor		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rides a two-wheel bike independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not able to jump, skip, hop or run in a coordinated way 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skilled at gross motor sequences, e.g. hopscotch • skilled with a small-sized ball, e.g. can catch a tennis ball in one hand • runs up and down stairs • places emphasis on achieving in physical ways • displays a mature pattern of throwing, kicking and striking • exhibits significant improvement in agility, balance, speed and strength, e.g. balances on one foot without looking, hops and jumps accurately, displays graceful and balanced movements • participates with confidence in movement activities in classroom and playground • jumps over a rope which is around 30cm above the ground. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uncoordinated ball skills • unable to ride a bike without trainer wheels by the age of eight • tires easily with every activity • difficulty maintaining posture for extended periods
<h3>Fine Motor</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holds and uses a pencil easily, moves fingers to write and draw rather than movement coming from whole arm or wrist • writes alphabet letters and numbers 1-20 and prints sentences with minimal reversals • correctly forms most letters (moves from top to bottom, left to right and anti-clockwise) • gradually writes smaller letters which are appropriately spaced and on the line • cuts out irregular shapes, glues accurately and uses sticky-tape • aware of left and right concepts • well established hand-eye coordination • copies more complex shapes using angled lines • touches and works with a variety of textures and grasps objects using all of hand confidently, e.g. craft activities • draws detailed pictures, e.g. ornament human figures with clothing and jewellery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finds it difficult and tiring to grasp and use a pencil • difficulty writing on the lines • shows poor sizing and spacing of printing and displays extremely effortful or slow handwriting • difficulty using scissors • unable to tie shoelaces and dress independently • confuses left and right , frequently reverses letters in writing
<h3>Language and Communication</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks and understand s15 000 words or more • uses 'th' sound correctly • communicates effectively in classroom and playground social settings • uses gestures to illustrate conversations • uses the telephone • speaks fluently and describes complicated happenings • reads out loud • knows different tenses and grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frustrated in the classroom or playground as not able to express themselves properly • trouble finding the right word when communicating • grammatically incorrect sentences • shows persistent confusion in conversation with friends or in the classroom • cannot retell a story independently and logically using full sentences

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • descriptive about character and place using language that is more precise and elaborate • uses gestures to illustrate conversations • writes letters to family or friends which include descriptions that are imaginative and detailed • uses secret code words or code language with friends • uses complex and compound sentences easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • withdrawn in conversation or in class • constantly wanders off the topic in conversation
<h3>Cognition</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands similarities and opposites • understands and carries out multiple-step instructions (approximately five steps) • understands concepts within the classroom • understands conversation amongst other children • understand and follows rules of grammar in conversation and written form • tells days of the week • understands time and how to tell the time • knows months and seasons • reads a book on their own • attends to tasks until completion • understands concepts of space and time in ways that are both logical and practical • learns to use common sense and knowledge of the world to process information and starts to 'read between the line' • knows that words contain sounds which are represented by letters • begins to grasp concepts of conservation, e.g. the shape of a container does not necessarily reflect the quantity it can hold • predicts words in a book by using knowledge of grammar, e.g. the person fell _ _ _ the ladder = off • uses sophisticated logic in efforts to understand everyday events, e.g. systematic in looking for a misplaced object • demonstrates an ability to hypothesise and solve problems beyond the here and now • adds and subtracts multiple-digit numbers; learning multiplication and division • repeats three digits backwards • counts backwards from 20 • learns to attend to long pieces of information and identifies what is important • follows fairly complex directions with little repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • struggles with curriculum expectations • displays frustration about learning • difficulty following instructions or remembering important information

Sensory Processing warning signs

- avoids movement activities, especially when feet leave the ground, e.g. playground/outdoor equipment or rough & tumble play
- seeks all kinds of movement, which interferes with daily routines, e.g. can't sit still, fidgets, finds excessive reasons for approaching the teacher
- difficulty maintaining posture for extended periods
- displays an unusual need to touch people and objects to the point where it is irritating to others
- avoids or has difficulty with close body contact with other children or adults
- avoids messy play or is repelled by the feeling of certain textures, e.g., sand, paint, glue, tape
- avoids eye contact with children and adults (can depend on cultural mores)
- misses written or demonstrated directions more than other students
- misses verbal directions in class more than other students
- seems oblivious within an active environment
- becomes distressed when there is a lot of noise in the area, e.g. during assemblies, lunch or large gatherings

Other

- any parental/carer or teacher concern
- significant regression of skills and abilities

9-10 years developmental milestones

	A child should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
9-10 years developmental milestones	Social/ Emotional	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displays a sense of wanting to gain social approval and live up to the expectations of people close to them • displays an ability to resolve social problems, e.g. fights with friends /siblings • understands other people's points of view • seeks out friendships based on common interests and proximity (neighbourhood children or classmates) • begins to show more interest in rules and basing games on realistic play • begins to develop moral reasoning, adopts social customs and moral values (understands honesty, right from wrong, fairness, good and bad, respect) • displays an increased interest for outdoor activity • displays a wider interest in everyday affairs and enjoys adventures beyond their everyday world, e.g. group adventures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little or no capacity to see things from another's point of view • poorly developed idea of right and wrong (self-centred and toddler-like) • poor ability to see how they can help in a problem situation • shows a lack of compromise and flexibility • frequent displays of aggression and harm to self and others
	Personal/ Social	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displays frequent interest in learning life skills, e.g. cooking, fixing things • displays egocentric thinking, although has developed a conscience • displays a need to achieve a sense of mastery and accomplishment • shows increased body awareness and self-perception • accepts failures and mistakes and takes responsibility for them • gives and maintains appropriate eye contact during conversation and in a classroom environment (can depend on cultural mores) • manages a variety of experiences within a classroom, responds appropriately and maintains focus on the activity at hand • begins to help in household tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows frustration and poor self confidence • low levels of self-perception regarding physical ability and appearance
Gross Motor		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participates in team games (soccer, football, cricket, tennis etc.) but might still need to develop some of the necessary complex skills • demonstrates an ability to swim (if taught) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoids sports in general • avoids team sports 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows increased awareness of own physical skills and how they appear to others • runs, climbs, skips rope, rides a bike and skates with skill and confidence • throws a ball with accuracy • participates with confidence in movement activities in classroom and playground • uses arms, legs, hands and feet with ease and improved precision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decreased levels of endurance and fitness • difficulty maintaining posture for extended periods
<h3>Fine Motor</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draws three-dimensional geometrical figures • displays fluid and automatic handwriting skills • displays increased writing speed • writes well without ruled lines • begins to join letters together when writing • demonstrates consistent sizing and spacing of letters • draws pictures in detail • touches and works with a variety of textures and grasp objects using hand confidently, e.g. craft activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty with construction and fine manipulative work • handwriting that isn't fluid and automatic • difficulty keeping up with written demands in class • relies heavily on structures/lines for setting-out written work • tires easily when completing a fine motor or writing task
<h3>Language and Communication</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks and understands 35 000 words or more • uses correct spelling and applies spelling rules in their writing • reads aloud fluently • expresses feelings and emotions effectively through words • uses slang expressions commonly expressed by peers in conversations • shows advanced understanding of grammatical sequences; recognises when a sentence is not grammatically correct • understands and uses language as a system for communicating with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cannot read or tell a short story independently and logically using full sentences • withdrawn in conversation or in class • frustrated in the classroom or playground because they are unable to express themselves properly • uses grammatically incorrect sentences • constantly wanders off the topic in conversation
<h3>Cognition</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recalls around 6 numbers after a single presentation • traces events based on recall, i.e. is able to think in reverse and follow a series of occurrences back to their beginnings • recognises that some words have a double meaning • uses reading and writing skills for non-academic activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • struggles with curriculum expectations • displays frustration about learning or the classroom • difficulty following instructions or remembering important information

- understands abstract concepts if real objects can be seen and manipulated, e.g. “If I eat one cookie now, only two will be left”
- develops an ability to reason based more on experience and logic, than intuition, e.g. “If I hurry and walk the dog, I can play with friends”
- reads books that are longer, more descriptive and have complex plots
- masters concepts of time, weight, volume and distance

Sensory processing warning signs

- avoids movement activities, especially when feet leave the ground, e.g. playground/outdoor equipment or rough & tumble play
- seeks all kinds of movement, which interferes with daily routines, e.g. can't sit still, fidgets, finds excessive reasons for approaching the teacher
- difficulty maintaining posture for extended periods
- displays an unusual need to touch people and objects to the point where it is irritating to others
- avoids or has difficulty with close body contact with other children or adults
- avoids messy play or is repelled by the feeling of certain textures, e.g. sand, paint, glue, tape
- avoids eye contact with children and adults (may depend on cultural mores)
- misses written or demonstrated directions more than other students
- misses verbal directions in class more than other students
- seems oblivious within an active environment
- becomes distressed when there is a lot of noise in the area, e.g. during assemblies, lunch or large gatherings

Other

- any parental /carer / teacher concerns
- significant regression of skills and abilities

11 - 12 years developmental milestones

	A child should be able to do some or all of the following:	Warning signs to watch for:
11 - 12 years developmental milestones	Social/ Emotional	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seeks out friendships based on psychological closeness • takes the perspective of others into account with own perspective • resolves social problems such as fights with friends and siblings • understands other people's points of view • handles frustration with fewer emotional outbursts and is able to discuss what is emotionally troubling • displays a strong urge to conform to peer-group morals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little or no capacity to see things from another's point of view • poorly developed idea of right and wrong (self-centred and toddler-like) • poor ability to see how they can help in a problem situation • shows a lack of compromise and flexibility • frequent displays of aggression and harm to self and others
	Personal/ Social	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • begins to question social conventions and re-examine own values and moral/ethical principles • displays an intense self-focus and can be worried about what their peers think of them • understands the need to assume responsibility for his or her own behaviour and that there are consequences associated with one's actions • displays an increased desire for privacy and sensitivity about body • shows increased body awareness and self-perception • shows increased understanding of sexuality, with the possibility of acting on sexual desires • manages a degree of independent work and organisation • develops detailed plans and lists to reach a desired goal • gives and maintains appropriate eye contact during conversation and in classroom environment (may depend on cultural mores) • manages a variety of experiences within a classroom, responds appropriately and maintains focus on the activity at hand • takes responsibility for choosing their own clothes, making their own personal arrangements and performing more responsible tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • often shows frustration and poor self confidence • low levels of self-perception regarding physical ability and appearance

Gross Motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participates in team sports but might still need to develop some of the necessary complex skills • demonstrates an ability to swim competently (if taught) • uses improved strength to run faster, throws balls further, jumps higher and kicks or bats balls more accurately • participates with confidence in movement activities in classroom and playground • shows increased awareness of own physical skills and how they appear to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoids sports in general • avoids team sports • decreased levels of endurance and fitness
Fine Motor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates linear perspective in drawings • displays fluid and automatic handwriting skills • writes well without ruled lines • displays a gradual emergence of fast, legible style of handwriting • touches and works with a variety of textures and grasp objects using all of hand confidently, e.g. craft activities • concentrates on continued refinement of fine motor abilities through a variety of activities e.g. model-building, playing an instrument, drawing, woodworking, cooking, sewing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty with construction and fine manipulative work • handwriting isn't fluid and automatic • difficulty keeping up with written demands in class • relies heavily on structures/lines for setting-out written work • easily gets tired when completing a fine motor or writing task
Language and Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • masters increasingly complex vocabulary and constructs longer and more complex sentences • accompanies words with facial expressions and gestures for emphasis • uses vocabulary skilfully to weave elaborate stories and precise descriptions • shows signs of being a thoughtful listener • masters several language styles, shifting back and forth based on the occasion, e.g. a more formal style when talking to teachers ,more casual style with parents and a style that often includes slang and code words when conversing with friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cannot read or tell a short story independently and logically using full sentences • frustrated in the classroom or playground because they are unable to express themselves properly • withdrawn in conversation or in class • uses grammatically incorrect sentences • constantly wanders off the topic in conversation
Cognition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops new thinking skills, e.g. thinking more about possibilities, thinking more abstractly, thinking in multiple dimensions • challenges adult knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • struggles with curriculum expectations • displays frustration about learning or the classroom

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops solutions and responses based on logic • displays improved long-term recall • uses their long-term memory capacity for sequencing, ordering and classifying, e.g. for solving complex mathematical problems • uses humour focused on satire, sarcasm and sex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty following instructions or remembering important information
<h3>Sensory processing warning signs</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoids movement activities, especially when feet leave the ground, e.g. playground/outdoor equipment or rough & tumble play • seeks all kinds of movement, which interferes with daily routines, e.g. can't sit still, fidgets, finds excessive reasons for approaching the teacher • difficulty maintaining posture for extended periods • displays an unusual need to touch people and objects to the point where it is irritating to others • avoids or has difficulty with close body contact with other children or adults • avoids messy play or is repelled by the feeling of certain textures, e.g. sand, paint, glue, tape • avoids eye contact with children and adults • misses written or demonstrated directions more than other students • misses verbal directions in class more than other students • seems oblivious within an active environment • becomes distressed when there is a lot of noise in the area, e.g. during assemblies, lunch or large gatherings 	
<h3>Other</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any parental/teacher concerns • significant regression of skills and abilities 	

Related Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Practice Guideline for Community Child Health Nurses, 2015

Useful Resources

[Raising Children Network](#) - Website created and produced by a partnership of member organisations of Australia's leading early childhood agencies, including the Australian Government.

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