

Social Skills Milestones



6 months old

- Learns to smile
- Begins to respond to familiar voices
- Shows an interest in faces
- Begins to explore
- Responds to caregiver interaction with eye contact and vocalisations
- Participates in simple games like "peek-a-boo"

12 months old

- Develops simple gestures, like waving, pointing and nodding head
- Uses different vocalisations to convey emotion
- Uses eye contact, gesture and vocalisations to request, protest, give, show, point or signal
- Brings object to caregiver for help
- Begins to use single words
- Develops joint attention

2 years old

- Begins to play alongside other children (parallel play)
- Starts to take turns in conversations
- Engages in pretend play with objects
- Begins to interact and show interest in others
- Imitates adult behaviours in play
- Communicates feelings, interest and dislikes

3 years old

- Takes turns in play
- Plays in groups and talks while playing
- Chooses who they would like to play with
- Shares toys for short periods
- Talks about feelings and expresses ideas
- Practices conversation skills by talking to self
- Shows frustration if not understood.
- Begins to gain more awareness around use of manners

4 years old

- Participates in role-play with other children and plays imaginatively (eg. cooking, dress-ups)
- Begins to negotiate in play and enjoys playing games with simple rules (e.g., hide and seek)
- Asks lots of questions
- Follows three step directions
- Invites peers to play
- Able to introduce topic in conversation and sustain topic for a few turns
- Understand that other people have different perspectives and emotions

5 years old

- Plays simple games and enjoys dramatic play
- Plays purposefully and constructively; play is well organised
- Shows interest in group activities
- Chooses friends to play with
- Shows interest in communicating with unfamiliar people
- Learns to sustain topics in conversation through a dozen turns
- Increasingly uses explanation and justifications to get what they want (e.g., "I need that", "I want")

6 years old

- Enjoys active games and is competitive in play
- Likes to make up games with their own rules
- Starts to recognise what is real and what is pretend
- Seeks to please caregivers and peers and requires affirmation from them
- Uses repetition to repair a conversation
- Starts to develop increased control over emotions

7 years old

- Enjoys active games and is competitive in play
- Likes to make up games with their own rules
- Starts to recognise what is real and what is pretend
- Uses repetition to repair a conversation
- Starts to develop increased control over emotions

8 years old

- Learns that others have different perspectives and takes these into consideration
- Develops allegiance to social group although still has a strong need for adult support
- Communicates thoughts
- Able to introduce and maintain conversation

