

Developmental Skills at a Glance: Ages 3-4

A family-friendly guide to skills you may notice emerging at this age

Children develop at different rates and in different ways. These are examples of skills you may notice emerging. One skill on its own does not tell us whether a child has a developmental difficulty.

COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE

Uses increasingly longer sentences • Has short back-and-forth conversations • Asks and answers questions • Talks about things that happened • Follows familiar directions with more than one step

MOVEMENT & HAND SKILLS

Runs, climbs and jumps during play • Kicks, throws and attempts to catch a ball • Draws lines and simple shapes • Uses crayons with increasing control • Participates in puzzles, playdough, cutting and crafts

REGULATION & PARTICIPATION

Participates in familiar routines with support • Moves between activities with predictable support • Communicates when upset or uncomfortable • Begins using familiar strategies with adult help

PLAY & SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

Plays alongside and with other children • Develops pretend-play ideas • Takes turns during simple games • Shares interests and ideas • Uses communication to join and continue play

EVERYDAY INDEPENDENCE

Participates in dressing • Uses utensils with increasing independence • Helps with clean-up and familiar routines • Makes choices • Lets an adult know when help is needed

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Engages with stories • Explores new materials • Learns through play, imitation and repetition • Participates in songs and group activities • Follows familiar classroom routines

SIMPLE IDEAS TO TRY AT HOME

- Talk about your day and ask simple questions about what happened.
- Invite your child to help with dressing, clean-up and meal routines.

- Read together and pause to let your child finish a familiar idea or predict what comes next.
- Make time for pretend play, drawing, building and active play.

Have questions about your child's development?

Hello Speech Developmental Services supports children and families with speech, language, occupational therapy and developmental services.

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For multilingual children, consider skills across all of the child's languages. AAC and other communication methods count as communication.

Evidence-informed by the Rourke Baby Record / Canadian Paediatric Society, CDC Learn the Signs. Act Early., ASHA developmental guidance, and occupational therapy participation frameworks.

For general education only. This handout is not a developmental screening or diagnostic tool.