

Developmental Skills at a Glance: Ages 4-5

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 longer, more organized sentences • Has several conversational turns on a shared topic • Answers who, what, where, when and why questions • Talks about past experiences • Tells or retells a simple story

PLAY & SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

Engages in shared play • Invites others to play or responds to invitations • Develops more elaborate pretend play • Takes turns and follows simple game rules • Uses communication to solve simple problems

MOVEMENT & HAND SKILLS

Runs, jumps and balances with increasing control • Throws, catches and kicks during play • Uses scissors and drawing tools • Draws recognizable forms • Begins writing or copying some letters with appropriate exposure

EVERYDAY INDEPENDENCE

Dresses with decreasing help • Manages some simple fasteners • Participates independently in familiar mealtime and hygiene routines • Organizes belongings with reminders • Asks for help when needed

REGULATION & PARTICIPATION

Communicates some feelings and support needs • Uses familiar strategies with adult guidance • Adjusts to manageable changes with preparation • Participates in classroom routines when appropriate supports are available

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Answers questions about familiar stories • Shows growing awareness of letters, sounds, numbers and print • Learns through play and problem-solving • Follows increasingly complex familiar directions • Participates in group learning with support

SIMPLE IDEAS TO TRY AT HOME

- Ask your child to tell you about part of their day.

- Read stories and talk about characters, problems and what might happen next.

- Include your child in everyday jobs such as sorting laundry or preparing snacks.

- Offer drawing, cutting, building, movement and simple game opportunities.

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.