

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

4-5 YEARS OLD



LANGUAGE

- Follows multi-step directions, such as group activities and rules to play games
- Understands and uses more location words like “beside” and “between”
- Understands time concepts *today, tomorrow, yesterday, first, then, next, last*
- Answers simple questions about a book or story after you read or tell it to them
- Uses at least one irregular plural form (Example: “feet”)
- Produces grammatically correct sentences that are longer and more complex
- Includes (1) main characters, settings, and words like “and” to connect information and (2) ideas to tell stories
- Tells a story they heard or made up with at least two events. (Example: a cat was stuck in a tree and a firefighter saved it)
- Keeps a conversation going with more than three back-and-forth exchanges
- Has a vocabulary of at least 1600 words
- Blends word parts, like cup + cake = cupcake
- Uses or recognizes simple rhymes (Example: bat-cat, ball-tall)
- Understands left and right
- Recognizes and names 10 or more letters and can usually write their own name
- Locates the front of a book and its title
- Counts up to 20
- Imitates reading and writing from left to right

SPEECH

- Produces most consonants correctly - correctly produces earlier consonants along with /r/ and “th” in words (by 5 years old)
- Is at least 75% understandable (by 5-years old)

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Follows rules or takes turns when playing games with other children
- Sings, dances, or acts for caregivers
- Does simple chores at home, like matching socks or clearing the table after eating
- Uses direct requests with justification (Example: “Stop that! You’re hurting me.”)
- Uses words to invite others to play
- Uses language to resolve disputes with peers
- Plays competitive exercise games
- Has good control of the elements of conversation
- Speaks of imaginary conditions, such as “What if ...” or “I hope ...”



Note: these milestones are meant to be a helpful resource to provide you with a general sense of how most children develop. However, they do not always account for individual differences such as neurodivergence and culture. These lists should be used to identify areas in which a child needs support to navigate their environment with ease and functionality, and not as absolute goalposts.

