

DEVELOPMENT MILESTONES

All children are unique and develop different skills at different speeds, but most children follow a similar developmental trajectory. We have listed a range of skills that should be attained by a particular age. If your child is missing a few, it is worth having a discussion with an Occupational Therapist or Speech and Language Therapist. Early intervention in a caring environment will help your child bridge the developmental gap and feel more comfortable among their peers.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication Skills are crucial for children to express themselves and understand the world around them. Vocabulary is just one important piece of the puzzle. Understanding all the tricky rules of communication such as the tone of voice, facial expressions and how to communicate with friends are also important for living in a social world.

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Fine Motor Skills should really be called 'things I can do with my hands'. Examples include fastening buttons, using cutlery, tying shoe laces and writing, using scissors and playing with Lego.

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Gross Motor Skills should really be called 'things I can do with the big muscles in my body'. Examples including; running, hopping, skipping, kicking a ball, climbing a tree and sitting at a table.

PLAY SKILLS

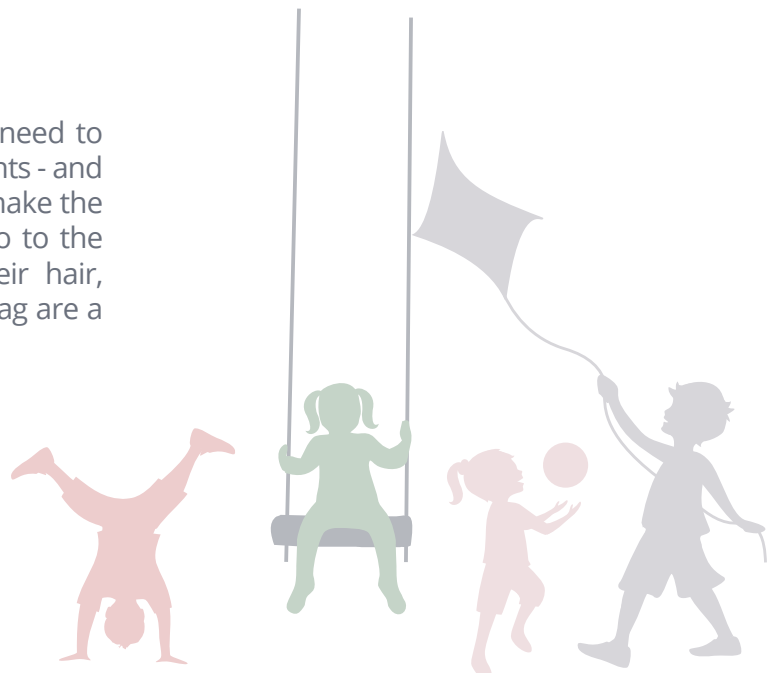
Play Skills are the dynamic activities that can bring your child joy, promote social skills, facilitate learning and improve motor skills. These can be unstructured or organised, independent or with others. While there is no universally accepted definition of play, allied health professionals agree that play skills are important for the well-being of children and can usually spot when children experience difficulties in this area.

INDEPENDENCE SKILLS

Independence skills are those skills that children need to achieve to lead an independent life from their parents - and importantly, they are also the daily tasks that will make the life of a parent a whole lot easier. Learning to go to the toilet, feeding themselves, dressing, washing their hair, pouring a glass of water and unpacking a school bag are a few examples.

SELF-REPRESENTATION

Self-Representation is the child's awareness of self.



BY 4 YEARS OF AGE

FINE MOTOR SKILLS (USING THEIR HANDS)

- ▶ Holds pencil using a more mature tripod grasp (quadruped or tripod)
- ▶ Draws a recognisable person with head, face, arms and legs
- ▶ Threads small and medium beads
- ▶ Copies circle and cross
- ▶ Snips paper

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS (USING THEIR LARGE MUSCLES)

- ▶ Imitates standing on one foot
- ▶ Imitates simple bilateral movements of limbs (e.g. arms above head)
- ▶ Climbs jungle gym and ladders
- ▶ Pedals a tricycle
- ▶ Walks up/down stairs alternating feet
- ▶ Jumps in place with two feet together
- ▶ Able to walk on tiptoes
- ▶ Throws a ball overarm
- ▶ Catches a ball that has been bounced
- ▶ Jumps over an object
- ▶ Can gallop
- ▶ Can hold prone extension (superman) for 18 seconds
- ▶ Can hold supine flexion (curling up into a ball) for 10 seconds.

SOCIAL SKILLS

- ▶ Talks about their feelings
- ▶ Take turns with other children
- ▶ Can negotiate

SELF- REPRESENTATION

- ▶ Understands that people show different emotions.
- ▶ Understands that others can have different beliefs from themselves
- ▶ The child has a vision for the future and verbalises what they want to be; Firefighter, Doctor

PLAY SKILLS

- ▶ Play can be pre-planned with scripts and embedded problems e.g. the dog is sick and visits the vet.
- ▶ The child can substitute objects that have no physical similarity to the 'real object' e.g. a book can be a plane.
- ▶ Toys can have feelings and thoughts
- ▶ The child can role play multiple roles in a single play scene e.g. a dancer and bus driver.
- ▶ Plays with 2-3 children in a group but may not be sharing (associative play)
- ▶ Engage in play themes which expand beyond personal experience e.g. firefighter rescuing a person

INDEPENDENCE SKILLS

- ▶ Feeds themselves without difficulty
- ▶ Independently tidies up toys/belongings
- ▶ Toileting independently in familiar environments such as home and school
- ▶ Dressing and undressing self with minimal assistance except for buttons, shoelaces etc
- ▶ Brushes teeth with minimal assistance

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

UNDERSTANDING

- ▶ Answers most questions about daily tasks
- ▶ Understands most 'Wh' questions; 'what', 'where' and 'who', including those about a story they have recently heard
- ▶ Understands some numbers
- ▶ Shows an awareness that some words start or finish with the same sounds

SPEAKING

- ▶ Average sentence length is 4-5 words
- ▶ Vocabulary is 1500 words
- ▶ Produces most consonant sounds but 'r' 'th' 'l' 'ch' and 'j' may not be correct
- ▶ Uses words, such as 'and', 'but' and 'because', to make longer sentences
- ▶ Describes recent events, such as morning routines
- ▶ Understands sentences with four information carrying words e.g. put the doll in the red car
- ▶ Ask lots of questions
- ▶ Uses personal pronouns (e.g. he/she, me/you) and negations (e.g. don't/can't)
- ▶ Counts to 5
- ▶ Names 4-6 colours

SEEK HELP IF:

- ▶ Is not understood by other adults, children
- ▶ Has speech fluency or stammering issues
- ▶ Has limited vocabulary
- ▶ Has limited attention
- ▶ Is not able to have a conversation
- ▶ Is not playing with other children
- ▶ Finds it difficult to play independently
- ▶ Play is simple and repetitive: lines up cars
- ▶ Is not able to go to the toilet independently
- ▶ Falls over or movements appear awkward
- ▶ Appears clumsy
- ▶ Has difficulty using their hands in a coordinated manner to complete simple tasks
- ▶ Frequent meltdowns or tantrums
- ▶ Displays self-stimulating behaviours such as flapping hands, spinning, clapping or making repetitive sounds
- ▶ Copies movie, tv shows, public announcements repetitively




Checklist: By 4 Years of Age

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

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INSTRUCTIONS: Place a tick in the YES or NO column if your child can independently complete this task (no assistance). If they have only partially acquired the skill, please answer NO. Add up all the 'YES' and enter it in the total score.

SKILL	Yes	No
Communication: Understanding		
1. Understands 'Wh' questions		
2. Understands some (3-4) numbers		
3. Understands sentences with four information carrying words e.g. put the doll in the red car		
Communication: Speaking		
4. Average sentence length is 4-5 words		
5. Describes recent events e.g. morning routine		
6. Uses personal pronouns (he/she, me/you)		

SKILL	Yes	No
Fine Motor		
7. Draws a recognisable person with a head, face, arms, and legs		
8. Threads small and medium beads		
9. Copies a circle and cross		
10. Snips paper		
11. Holds a pencil using a tripod/quadropod grasp 		

SKILL	Yes	No
Gross Motor		
12. Imitates standing on one foot		
13. Walks up and down steps with alternating feet		
14. Walks on tip toes for 2-3m		
15. Catches a ball that has been bounced to them		
16. Gallops		

SKILL	Yes	No
Play		
17. Plays with 2-3 children in a group but may not be sharing toys		
18. Engage in play themes which expand beyond personal experiences e.g. firefighter rescuing people		
19. The child can substitute objects that have no similarity to the 'real' object e.g. a book can be a plane.		

SKILL	Yes	No
Independence Skills		
20. Toileting independently in familiar environments		
21. Dressing and undressing with minimal assistance except for buttons, shoelaces etc.		
22. Tidies up toys/belongings		

TOTAL SCORE	
YES	
NO	

Scores:
20-23: No intervention required
16-20: Monitor
15 or below: Seek Advice from an Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Early Years Teacher or Doctor.



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