

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

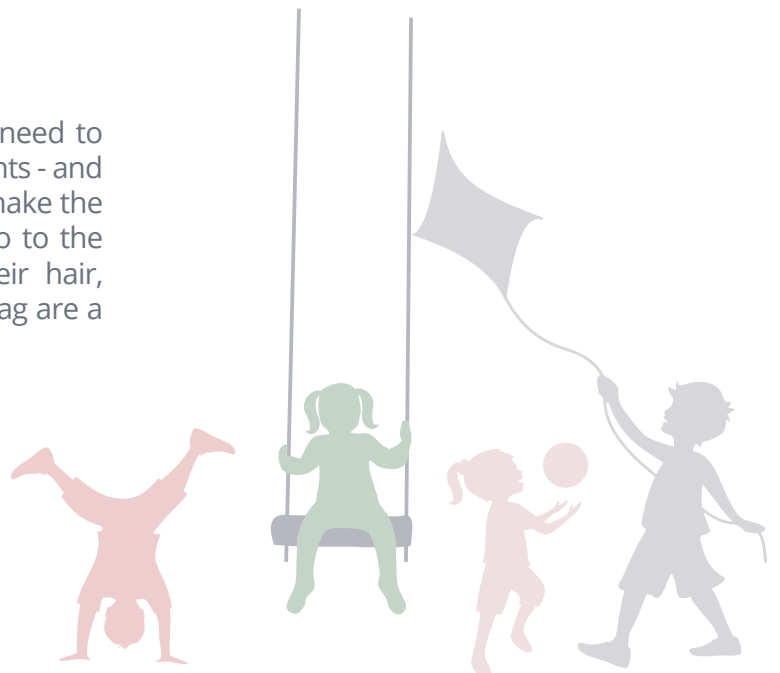
Play Skills are the dynamic activities that can bring your child joy, promote social skills, facilitate learning and improve motor skills. These can be unstructured or organised, independent or with others. While there is no universally accepted definition of play, allied health professionals agree that 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 5 YEARS OF AGE

FINE MOTOR SKILLS (USING THEIR HANDS)

- Copies a triangle
- Prints own name
- Writes numbers 1-5
- Completes 6-12 piece puzzle
- Cuts well with scissors including cutting circle, square, triangle
- Hand dominance is established (uses left or right hand consistently for tasks)
- Colours within a boundary

INDEPENDENCE SKILLS

- Starts to use chopsticks
- Chooses weather appropriate clothes
- Dresses independently
- Unpacks school bag
- Feeds self without difficulty
- Can open lunch box and containers
- Brushes teeth
- Brushes hair

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS (USING THEIR LARGE MUSCLES)

- Performs jumping jacks correctly
- Hops and stands on 1 foot for 5 seconds
- Walks up and down stairs without support ▸ Able to walk on tiptoes
- Throws ball overhead with appropriate force and direction
- Catches small-medium sized balls such as a dodgeball
- Can ride a two wheel bicycle (with or without training wheels)
- Can skip with coordination
- Can hold prone extension (superman) for 31-60 seconds
- Can hold supine flexion (curling up into a ball) for 25 seconds

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

UNDERSTANDING

- Follow three-part instructions (e.g. put on your shoes, get your backpack and line up outside)
- Understand time related words (e.g. 'before', 'after', 'now' and 'later')
- Start thinking about the meaning of words when learning
- Understand instructions without stopping to listen

SPEAKING

- Begin to recognise some letter, sounds and numbers
- Uses well formed sentences that can be understood by most people
- Tell simple short stories with a beginning, middle and end
- Use past and future verbs correctly (e.g. 'went', 'will go')
- Produces most speech sounds, but still may have difficulties with 's', 'r', 'l' and 'th'
- Vocabulary of around 3000 words

SOCIAL SKILLS

- Enjoys playing with other children
- May have a particular friend or 'best friends'

SELF-REPRESENTATION

- See themselves positively and overestimates their abilities.
- Can describe what they are good and bad at 'I'm good at running but bad at reading'
- Wants to and derives pleasure from making their parents/caregivers proud
- Understands that others have a viewpoint about them
- Emotions such as shame and doubt are apparent ▸ Inhibition of thoughts starts ▸ A child can feel 'bad' about their behaviour
- Some confusion of fantasy/imagined and real worlds e.g. Santa Claus and Tooth Fairy
- Mistrust or being wary of situations can occur

PLAY SKILLS

- Play scripts can be carried over 2-3 weeks
- Play scripts can reflect real life events or fantasy
- Problems are embedded in the play 'the alien is attacking earth' or 'the child has broken their leg'
- Children can use any object in play and make up a use for it.
- Children use a lot of language during play ▸ Dolls can have feelings and thoughts ▸ Children can take on a 'role' and understand the 'role' of other children e.g. Doctor/Patient, Superhero/Villain
- Children can co-operate and negotiate in their play with other children
- Solutions are found to problems/conflicts during play

SEEK HELP IF:

- Has speech fluency or stammering issues
- Has limited vocabulary
- Can't have a conversation
- Play is immature or basic compared to other children their same age
- 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
- Frequent meltdowns or tantrums
- Can't remain focused on an activity for 5 minutes
- Struggles using their hands for simple activities such as drawing or using a spoon
- Can't write their name
- Displays self stimulating behaviours such as flapping hands, spinning, clapping
- Copies movie, tv shows, public announcements repetitively
- Can't sit still, even for brief periods




Checklist: By 5 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. Follows 3-part instructions e.g. brush your teeth, put your book away and get into bed.		
2. Understands time related words: before, after, now		
3. Understands instructions without stopping to listen to them		
Communication: Speaking		
4. Uses well-formed sentences that can be understood by most people		
5. Uses past and future verbs correctly (went, will go)		
6. Tells simple short stories with a beginning, middle and end		
7. Has a vocabulary of 3000 words		

SKILL	Yes	No
Fine Motor		
8. Prints own name		
9. Completes 6–12-piece puzzle		
10. Cuts well with scissors including cutting out a circle, square and triangle		
11. Hand dominance is established		
12. Holds a pencil using a tripod grasp 		

SKILL	Yes	No
Gross Motor		
13. Hops and stands on 1 foot for 5 seconds		
14. Walks up and down stairs without support		
15. Throws ball overhead with appropriate force and direction		
16. Catches small balls such as a small dodge ball		
17. Can hold prone extension (superman) for 31-60 seconds		

SKILL	Yes	No
Play		
18. Play scripts reflect real life or fantasy events		
19. Dolls/Toys can have feelings and thoughts		
20. Can co-operate and negotiate in their play with other children		
21. Can use any object in play and make up a use for it.		



SKILL	Yes	No
Independence Skills		
22. Unpacks/packs school bag and remembers the routine		
23. Feeds self without difficulty		
24. Copes in a busy/noisy environment		

TOTAL SCORE	
YES	
NO	

Scores:
21-24: No intervention required
16-21: Monitor
15 or below: Seek Advice from an Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Teacher or Doctor.



Talk to Us

Email: info@youngfolktherapy.com
Phone: +852 3102 0010
www.youngfolktherapy.com

Visit Us

Unit 3-4, 19F, One Mong Kok Road
Commercial Centre, 1 Mong Kok Road,
Mong Kok, Hong Kong

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