



Developmental Checklist for Preschoolers (Ages 3-5)

FINE MOTOR

Developing Skills

- Colors pictures without excessive deviation outside lines
- Draws a person with at least 6 different body parts
- Draws simple shapes (ex. ○, +, □, △, X)
- Makes continuous cuts on a line with scissors
- Manipulates playdoh to make simple objects or figures
- Independently feeds self with spoon or fork
- Independently dresses and undresses self, including shoes and socks
- Independently manipulates fasteners (ex. buttons, zippers, snaps) on clothing by age 5 (shoelaces by age 6)
- Independently washes and dries hands
- Copies building block or peg designs
- Consistently uses dominant hand by age 5

Warning Signs

- Uses too much or too little pressure when coloring/drawing
- Accidentally breaks pencils, crayons or toys from pressing too hard
- Frequently switches between hands during art activities or when eating
- Awkward grasp on utensils (ex. forks, spoons) or tools (ex. crayons, chalk, pencils, markers, scissors)
- Dislikes crafts/activities which might make his/her fingers messy or dirty (ex. chalk, glue, etc.)

GROSS MOTOR

Developing Skills

- Rides a tricycle independently
- Rides a bicycle with training wheels independently
- Catches and throws balls of various sizes
- Hops on 1 foot
- Gallops
- Skips
- Independently pumps a swing by age 5
- Safely navigates environments without falling or bumping into objects or people
- Imitates body movements and hand motions while singing songs or playing Simon Says

Warning Signs

- Clumsy; falls or trips frequently
- Has difficulty with body awareness or personal space
- Seems overly active; unable to slow down
- Avoids playground activities
- Walks on tiptoes
- Has poor muscle tone; may seem weak or floppy
- Has difficulty tolerating prone position (lying on tummy)
- Has difficulty using the appropriate amount of force for using objects, playing with peers, or petting animals
- Fatigues quickly; frequently leans on others or furniture for support

ORAL MOTOR

Developing Skills

- Eats an increasing variety of food
- Is willing to try new foods of various textures, flavors, and temperatures
- Takes appropriately-sized bites of food
- Independently drinks from an open cup without spilling

Warning Signs

- Picky eater
- Overstuffs food in mouth
- Mouths non-food items or objects
- Drools
- Has speech that is difficult to understand

AUDITORY

Developing Skills

- Consistently responds to verbal cues
- Is able to follow 1-2 step commands

Warning Signs

- Overreacts to ordinary household or classroom sounds
- Unable to filter out background noise; easily distracted
- Difficulty understanding language

TACTILEDeveloping Skills

- Identifies simple shapes (ex. ○, □, △, ◇, etc.) and familiar objects (ex. toy car, penny, crayon, etc.) by touch
- Enjoys playing with toys/objects with various textures (ex. smooth, bumpy, soft, hard, cotton, felt, rubber, etc.)
- Enjoys playing in environments with various textures (ex. grass, sand, etc.)
- Wears clothing with a variety of textures and materials

Warning Signs

- Under- or over-responsiveness to pain
- Dislikes baths
- Dislikes being cuddled or hugged
- Dislikes haircuts
- Shows discomfort getting hands messy
- Appears sensitive to certain textures or fabrics
- Has difficulty getting comfortable, settling into bed
- Dislikes teeth brushing more than others his/her age

VISUALDeveloping Skills

- Recognizes items as same or different
- Sorts objects based on size, shape, or color
- Assembles age-appropriate puzzles
- Visually tracks a moving object (ex. ball)
- Enjoys looking at and reading books

Warning Signs

- Easily distracted in busy or cluttered environments
- Seems sensitive to light or prefers dark/dim lighting
- Often tilts head or looks out of corner of eye
- Has difficulty sustaining visual gaze or tracking moving objects

VESTIBULARDeveloping Skills

- Maintains balance in everyday tasks
- Enjoys swinging, jumping, sliding and other playground activities
- Has a good sense of rhythm and can clap to a beat
- Uses the two sides of the body in a coordinated manner when performing bilateral tasks such as cutting with scissors, opening screw-on lids, skipping, swimming, etc.

Warning Signs

- Dislikes car rides or becomes car sick easily
- Appears uncomfortable with swinging
- Dislikes jumping or having feet off floor
- Seeks twirling, spinning, rocking, or swinging more than other children
- Gets dizzy easily or never gets dizzy
- Poor endurance for standing or sitting; easily tires or needs to move/wiggle in order to sustain these positions

ATTENTION/BEHAVIORDeveloping Skills

- Expresses self and makes needs known in an appropriate manner
- Attends to and participates appropriately in school activities (ex. circle time, story, art)
- Is able to play with one toy or theme for 15 minutes

Warning Signs

- Needs more verbal cuing to complete age-appropriate tasks than other children
- Short attention span
- Unable to attend in a busy environment (ex. classroom)
- Aggressive or impulsive behavior

SOCIAL/EMOTIONALDeveloping Skills

- Plays in small groups with other children
- Takes turns with peers; engages in cooperative play
- Engages in imaginative and pretend play
- Resolves conflicts with peers with some adult guidance
- Self-soothes when upset
- Is able to cope with unexpected change
- Is able to separate and be away from parents when with familiar persons (ex. babysitter/nanny, teacher, relatives)
- Aware of safety precautions (ex. no talking to strangers, aware of risky/unsafe environments and behaviors)

Warning Signs

- Easily frustrated; frequent outbursts/tantrums
- Repetitive in play, plays the same things over and over, limited play skills
- Strong need for routine, poor flexibility
- Failure to explore
- Difficulty with transitions—between toys/activities, between environments
- Inability to settle down; sleep difficulties
- Poor emotional regulation, easily upset, unusually fussy