

Preschool Developmental Milestones

 kamloopschildrenstherapy.org/social-emotional-preschool-milestones

Social & Emotional Development (playing with others, controlling emotions)

This area of development involves learning to interact with other people, and to understand and control your own emotions. Babies start to develop relationships with the people around them right from birth, but the process of learning to communicate, share, and interact with others takes many years to develop. Developing the ability to control your emotions and behavior is also a long process. Children continue to develop their social-emotional skills well into their teenage years, or even young adulthood.

Below are some of the typical developmental milestones for social-emotional skills. After each age group, you can find some “red flags” that might indicate a concern.

Please also see [communication skills](#) for more information about early development because speech and language skills are so important for effective social development.

Between the ages of 3-4 years, your child will:

- Share toys, taking turns with help
- Initiate or join in play with other children and make up games
- Follow simple rules in games, but will always want to win
- Begin dramatic play, acting out whole scenes such as travelling or pretending to be animals
- Might be bossy and defiant
- Show more independence
- Experience a broad range of emotions (ie: jealousy, excitement, fear, happiness, anger)
- Become less egocentric
- Be more even-tempered and cooperative with parents
- May show attachment to one friend

Red Flags for Social-Emotional Development (4 years)

If you notice some of the following things by the time your child is 4 years old, you may want to talk to your doctor, or to another health professional such as a mental health clinician, a [speech-language pathologist](#), an [occupational therapist](#), or a psychologist.

- He is not able to initiate or join in play with other children
- She is not able to share at all with other children
- She wants to be dependent on her caregivers for everything
- He is extremely “rigid” about routines, and becomes extremely upset when things are changed
- She has extreme difficulty separating from you
- He is too passive or fearful, and does not want to try things other children his age are doing
- She has extreme fears that interfere with daily activities

Between the ages of 4-5 years, your child will:

- Show some awareness of moral reasoning, such as “fairness”, and good or bad behavior
- Develop friendships
- Express more awareness of other people’s feelings
- Enjoy imaginative play with other children, such as dress up or house
- Get better at sharing and taking turns with other children
- Enjoy playing games, but might change the rules as he goes
- Stick with a difficult task for longer period (controlling frustration or anger better)
- Show an understanding of right and wrong
- Listen while others are speaking
- Play games with simple rules

Red Flags for Social-Emotional Development (5 years)

If you notice some of the following things by the time your child is 5 years old, you may want to ask for help from your doctor, or from another health professional such as a mental health clinician, a [speech-language pathologist](#), an [occupational therapist](#), or a psychologist.

- He is not interested in playing with other children
- She is not able to share or take turns with other children
- She wants to be dependent on her caregivers for everything
- He is extremely “rigid” about routines, and becomes extremely upset when things are changed
- She has extreme difficulty separating from you
- He is too passive or fearful, and does not want to try things other children his age are doing
- She has extreme fears that interfere with daily activities

If you have concerns about your child at any age, please feel free to [contact us](#) to speak to a professional. You can also [make a referral](#) to our centre at anytime.