

Play and Social Development Charts

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Play is the voluntary engagement in self-motivated activities that are normally associated with pleasure and enjoyment. Play is a vital activity in children developing age appropriate skills and understanding their place in the world.

Social skills are the skills we use everyday to interact and communicate with others. These also play a substantial role in aiding the broad range of age appropriate skill development.

Note: Each stage of development assumes that the preceding stages have been successfully achieved.

How to use this chart: Review the skills demonstrated by the child up to their current age. If you notice skills that have not been met *below* their current age contact Kid Sense Child Development on 1800 KIDSENSE (1800 543 736).

Age	Developmental Milestones	Possible implications if milestones not achieved
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<p>0-6 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes eye contact for a few seconds • Responds with a smile when socially approached • Recognises parent visually • Discriminates strangers • Laughs in response to play • Distinguishes between friendly and angry voices • Manipulates and explores objects • Manipulates a rattle • Imaginative play actions are absent or random 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lead to poor muscle development • May lead to a delayed ability to play independently • May lead to delayed sensory development due to delayed interaction with toys and other sensory objects • May lead to poor emotional development (e.g. may cry easily)
<p>6-12 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays peek-a-boo • Participates in clapping when prompted • Lifts arms to parent • Responds to facial expressions • Extends toys to others • Manipulates and explores objects • Imitates an adult's actions • Places doll with head upright and vertical to the ground • Imaginative play actions are absent or random 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lead to delayed sensory development due to lack of sensory play experiences • May lead to delayed fine motor skills due to lack of practice manipulating toys and objects • May have difficulties socialising with parents and joint attention • May struggle to copy and learn from others due to poor understanding and attention

<p>1-2 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has toy preferences • Identifies self in mirror • Imitates adult behaviour • Likes repetitive actions such as putting objects in and out of boxes and scribbling on many pages • Imitates a pretend play action (e.g. giving a drink) • Demonstrates play related to their body (e.g. sleeping, eating) • Spontaneously performs one action with a doll (e.g. hugs doll) • Uses a similar looking object for the needed object (e.g. uses paper as a blanket) • Is unable to share and competes with other children for toys • Looks for hidden objects • Begins to play next to other children • Observes other children playing around them but will not play with them • Engages in imaginative play • Says “hi”, “bye” and “please” without prompting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lead to delayed fine motor skills due to lack of practice manipulating toys and objects • May have difficulties socialising with parents and joint attention • May struggle to copy and learn from others due to poor understanding and attention
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<p>2-3 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a strong sense of ownership • May begin cooperative play • Treats doll or teddy as if it is alive • Plays alongside others but will not play together with them • Begins to use symbols in their play such as a stick becoming a sword • Play themes reflect less frequently experienced life events (e.g. visiting the doctor) • Play actions are detailed and logical with “No” • Uses or plans story-line • Has an awareness of a parent’s approval or disapproval of their actions • Will express emotions • Will verbalise their desires/feelings (e.g. “I want a drink”) • Begins to obey and respect simple rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have difficulties socialising with peers and joint attention • May struggle to copy and learn from others due to poor understanding and attention • May lead to delayed fine motor skills due to lack of practice manipulating toys and objects • May lead to delayed manipulation of small objects such as toys, pencils and scissors • May result in frustration when manipulating small toys and objects
<p>3-4 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays with mechanical toys • Takes turns with other children • Plays with 2 or 3 children in a group • Play themes expand beyond personal experience (e.g. fireman rescuing people) • Talks about their feelings • Feels shame when caught doing the wrong thing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have difficulties socialising with peers • May struggle to copy and learn from others due to poor understanding and attention • May have difficulties expressing wants, needs, thoughts and ideas • May display frustration when manipulating small toys and objects

<p>4-5 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins taking turns and negotiating • Plays together with shared aims of play with others • Usually prefers playing with other children than playing by themselves • Plays imaginatively (e.g. playing in the home-corner, dressing up, cooking) • Enjoys playing games with simple rules (e.g. hide and seek) • May change the rules of a game as the activity progresses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have difficulties socialising • May struggle to copy and learn from others due to poor understanding and attention • May have difficulties expressing wants, needs, thoughts and ideas • May lead to poor self-esteem due to difficulties interacting with other children
<p>5-6 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play themes include themes never personally experienced (e.g. going to space) • Plays and negotiates with others during play • Play is well organised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have difficulties socialising • May have difficulties retelling events • May have difficulties following routines • May have difficulties expressing thoughts and ideas verbally and in written form • May lead to poor self-esteem due to difficulties interacting with other children

<p>6-7 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys playing in small groups and making up their own games with rules • Enjoys playing co-operative games but has difficulties coping with losing • Likes to play with other children of their own gender • Enjoys using and understanding rules in play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have difficulties socialising • May have difficulties following instructions at home and at school • May have difficulties retelling events • May have difficulties expressing thoughts and ideas verbally and in written form • May lead to poor self-esteem due to difficulties interacting with other children
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This chart was designed to serve as a functional *screening* of developmental skills per age group. It does *not* constitute an assessment nor reflect strictly standardised research.

The information in this chart was compiled over many years from a variety of sources. This information was then further shaped by years of clinical practice as well as therapeutic consultation with child care, pre-school and school teachers in South Australia about the developmental skills necessary for children to meet the demands of these educational environments. In more recent years, it has been further modified by the need for children and their teachers to meet the functional *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)* requirements that are not always congruent with standardised research.

Contact us today to make an initial enquiry or book an assessment for your child on 1800 KID SENSE (1800 543 736)



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