

your child: from 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 years

From Observer to Explorer: The Most Important Developmental Achievements



SOCIAL

Typically Can:

- Begin to grasp concept of sharing
- Show attachment to one playmate
- Enjoy games with rules
- Show interest in sex differences and may undress with other children
- Enjoy dramatic play with others
- Takes turns
- Generally stops napping

Emerging Skills:

- Show concern for younger or hurt person
- Be a team leader
- Play cooperatively

LANGUAGE

Typically Can:

- Play with language and make up new words
- Speaks with almost adult-like grammar and pronunciation
- Talk about imaginary conditions
- Use negatives (e.g., "I don't want to go out")
- Use plural nouns (e.g., dogs)

Emerging Skills:

- Ask questions of "why" and "how"
- Use past, present and future verbs (e.g. talked, talk and will talk)
- Understand top, middle and bottom
- Say most speech sounds accurately

GROSS MOTOR

Typically Can:

- Walk on tiptoes for 10 feet
- Balance on walking board
- Ride tricycle without bumping into things
- Enjoy throwing and catching games
- Move to music in rhythm
- Walk up and downstairs with alternating feet

Emerging Skills:

- Bounce on trampoline
- Carry out rudimentary galloping
- Jump down from 2 foot height

COGNITIVE

Typically Can:

- Point to 4 common shapes (e.g., star, triangle)
- Recall events in recent past
- Begin to match pictures in simple lotto games
- Understand difference between reality and fantasy
- Distinguish something alive from an object
- Count to 5

Emerging Skills:

- Show interest in written word and letters
- Follow 3 simple instructions
- Understand complete sentences
- Understand number concepts to 10
- Name 5 colours

EMOTIONAL

Typically Can:

- Control frustration and anger much better
- Experience positive self-esteem, feels good about themselves & what they do
- Talk about feelings such as hungry, sleepy, not well
- Comply to requests from parents a greater percentage of the time
- Concentrate for up to 20 minutes
- Show strong interest and feelings for family
- Persevere on a difficult task for longer

Emerging Skills:

- Show desire to fit into routines of homes
- Carry out small chores to fit into family and be responsible
- Show self-reflection (e.g., "What I said isn't nice")
- Understand and have positive and negative feelings about another person

FINE MOTOR

Typically Can:

- Put large jigsaw puzzle pieces together
- Cut with play scissors
- Point with a large brush on large paper
- Toss bean bags into holes in targets
- Manipulate clay
- Draw a person with 3 parts
- Fold paper

Emerging Skills:

- Handle scissors and cut out
- Copy a cross
- Pull up zipper but cannot do buttons
- Screw lids on jars
- Carry liquids in cup
- Put on shoes but not tie laces

For More Information

**Contact Your Local Northwestern Health Unit Office
or Healthy Babies Healthy Children**

Toll Free at 1-800-465-4377